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(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

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24 October 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 24 October 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) the following Performance Targets for 2005–06.

Science

1. Fulfil commitments on time, within budget and to agreed standard of quality.
2. Delivery of R&D milestone to exceed 90 per cent. score.
3. Enhance scientific capability and reputation.
4. Achieve high standard of excellence based on indicators of scientific and technical quality with an overall score to exceed 75 per cent.

Customer

1. Provide a high standard of services to the satisfaction of customers.
2. Customer Satisfaction Survey overall score to exceed 82 per cent.

Organisational efficiency

1. Recover the full cost of our services and invest for the future.
2. 100 per cent. cost recovery.
3. Operate with simple, reliable and effective processes.
4. Achieve agreed Gershon Efficiency Plan savings.

People

1. Respect and help the agency's people to develop.
2. Annual Staff Survey satisfaction score to exceed 63 per cent.

Further details are given in the CEFAS Business Plan for 2005–06, a copy of which has been provided to the Library of the House.

Central Science Laboratory

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) the following performance targets for 2005–06:

1. To recover the full economic cost of operation on a resource accounting basis, recognising the normal cost of operation.
2. To deliver the efficiency targets set out in the Business Plan, including the Gershon efficiency targets.
3. To make satisfactory progress with the Action Plan for enhancing science quality resulting from the 2001–02 Science Audit (including increase in SciSearch publications by 5 per cent.)
4. To assist DEFRA in developing and implementing the Laboratory Strategy.
5. To manage the Agency in an effective manner, including delivery of e-Government and commercial exploitation or research outputs.
6. To achieve a minimum of 90 per cent. of project milestones in commissioned projects which supports DEFRA's objectives.
7. To achieve a mean score of 4.4 on a scale of 0 to 5 for the assessment of customer satisfaction using the revised methodology.

Further details are given in the CSL business plan for 2005–06, a copy of which has been provided to the Library of the House.

Pesticides Safety Directorate

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Pesticides Safety Directorate the following Performance Targets for 2005–06.

1. To evaluate pesticide approval applications and contribute to the EU Review programme.
2. To develop policy initiatives to reduce the negative impact of pesticides and to encourage alternative control measures.
3. To ensure UK objectives are reflected in EU legislation and regulation.
4. To monitor actively pesticide use and limit illegal use by taking appropriate enforcement action.
5. To increase public awareness and understanding of safe use and regulation of pesticides.
6. To recover the full cost of operations from the industry and Defra, and achieve efficiency savings.

Further details are given in the PSD Business Plan for 2005–06, a copy of which has been provided to the Library of the House.

Veterinary Laboratories Agency

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) the following performance targets for 2005–06:

Financial

1. Achieve full cost recovery.

Efficiency

1. Deliver 2.5 per cent. efficiency savings.

Service Delivery

1. Meet 85 per cent. ROAME milestones.
2. Meet the baseline (set in 2004–05) for deliverables for surveillance contracts.
3. Achieve a score of at least 75 per cent. satisfaction in the VLA customer satisfaction survey.

Quality

1. Implement VLA's quality strategy. This includes:

   Maintaining current third party certifications.

   Achieve ISO9001 accreditation across the whole agency.

Safety

1. Implement VLA safety plan to timescales indicated.

Further details are given in the VLA business plan for 2005–06, a copy of which has been provided to the Library of the House.

Veterinary Medicines Directorate

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I have set the Veterinary Medicines Directorate the following Performance Targets for 2005–06.

1. To authorise veterinary medicines efficiently, using good science, thus ensuring their safety, quality and efficacy, and in accordance with legislative requirements.
2. To ensure the field use of veterinary medicines is safe and effective by monitoring use by using best practice in pharmacovigilance.
3. To ensure the safe use of veterinary medicines authorised in the UK through surveillance of residues and follow-up action where misuse is detected.
4. To develop policy to ensure that veterinary medicines can be used effectively and safely and protect human health, animal health and welfare and the environment.
5. To seek to encourage the proper use of veterinary medicines and actively discourage improper use.
6. To develop the VMD to ensure it is fit for purpose and its vision and objectives are contributing to Defra's PSA Objective VI, as well as its overall vision and objectives.

Further details are given in the VMD Business Plan for 2005–06, a copy of which has been provided to the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration Rules Change—Civil Partnerships

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): The Immigration (Procedure for Formation of Civil Partnerships) Regulations 2005 and the statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules [HC 582] will be laid today and copies will be placed in the Library.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 comes into force on 5 December. At the same time as the Act comes into force, the immigration rules will be amended to ensure that civil partners and proposed civil partners are afforded the same treatment as spouses and fiancés.

Those subject to immigration control wishing to register a civil partnership will be required to demonstrate that they have:

an entry clearance granted for the purpose of registering a civil partnership; or

a certificate of approval from the Home Office; or

settled status in the UK.

In order to qualify for a certificate of approval applicants will normally need to have been granted over six months leave in the United Kingdom and have at least three months of that leave remaining.

To assist those wishing to give notice on 5 December the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will accept applications for certificates of approval and entry clearance for civil partnership from 14 November. Application forms will be made available on the IND website before this date. Applicants should not use the COA marriage application form as this will lead to their application being returned and may mean that we are unable to process the application on the correct form in time for them to give notice.

We will aim to process and return applications received between 14 and 21 November ready for applicants to give notice at the earliest opportunity. However, we will provide this service only where the applicant qualifies for a certificate of approval.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

South Asia Earthquake

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): As each day passes, the true scale of the disaster is becoming clearer. Due to the mountainous nature of the terrain, many areas could not be accessed immediately, and some have still not been reached. The Government of Pakistan now report that 51,400 people have died with 74,500 injured. The number of homeless people is estimated to be between 2.7 and 3.2 million. The homeless are in urgent need of shelter, blankets, and warmth.

On 20 October I visited Muzaffarabad and Balakot and saw the scale of the devastation. We are now in a race against time to save lives as winter sets in and temperatures drop below zero. On the same day, I allocated an additional £20 million to the relief and recovery effort. This brings DFID's total pledge to date to £33 million. £9 million of this new allocation is already earmarked for the relief operation including an extra £1 million for medical support and services, an extra £1 million in support of water and sanitation, and an extra £1 million towards shelter.

The Government of Pakistan and the international community face massive challenges in reaching the population affected in remote areas. DFID has committed a sizeable part of the new allocation to supporting the coordination and logistical effort. UK support includes £3 million for helicopters including three British military heavy lift CH-47 Chinook helicopters, as well as four helicopters already being funded by DFID through the UN and Red Cross. DFID has also earmarked a further £1 million for logistics, transport and coordination, and £2 million for the Red Cross movement which includes helicopters as well as the provision of immediate relief supplies such as blankets, tents and water. The remaining funds, around £12 million, will be allocated as needed.

Of the £13 million previously announced DFID has allocated: £5 million for the UN Flash Appeal; £3 million to pay for in-kind donations and airlifts for the Disasters Emergency Committee; £1.5 million for the Red Cross; £300,000 for Save the Children UK for the provision of tents, blankets, clothing, primary health care and services to help reunify families; £300,000 for Christian Aid for tents, food packages, shelter kits, first aid and medical assistance; and £300,000 for Action Aid for the provision of relief, food packages, shelter, health centres, tents, medical supplies and support. £1,660,000 has been provided by the UK as part of the EU's aid contribution through the European Commission Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO).

The UK Search and Rescue teams returned on 14 and 15 October, having been involved in the rescue of 14 people. The Government, through DFID's emergency response team, have also: undertaken 13 relief flights carrying a total of 900 tonnes of

emergency supplies; organised and funded 23 Disasters Emergency Committee flights with another three planned over the next few days; paid for half of the World Health Organisation's appeal to provide enough health and trauma kits to support 40,000 people for three months; and provided logistical support to the United Nations including vehicles, airport handling equipment and an Humanitarian Information Centre.

Further information on the emergency response can be found at www.dfid.gov.uk. Staff at the High Commission in Islamabad continue to offer consular assistance to British nationals in Pakistan and who are travelling to the affected area to search for relatives. Sadly, there has been one confirmed British fatality, a twelve-year-old boy from Luton. We have helped his injured parents obtain expert medical attention, accommodation and provided them with emergency passports. A few missing persons remain unaccounted for and High Commission staff are continuing to try to locate them.

In recognition of the fact that many people here in the UK will be grieving for and concerned about relatives caught up in the tragedy, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who has responsibility for the aftercare of disaster victims, has arranged for the 7 July Assistance Centre to extend its helpline to those affected by the South Asia Earthquake. The Centre is offering advice and support services on which people can draw. The helpline number is: 08457054 7444.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sinn Féin

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): In my Written Statement of 19 October, I said that I had decided to restore Sinn Féin's Assembly allowances with effect from 1 November.

As I am required to do by section 95A(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, I have today laid in Parliament the Direction I have made which gives effect to that decision. Accordingly, Sinn Féin's entitlement to the financial assistance payable to the parties represented in the Northern Ireland Assembly will be restored from 1 November.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 25 October 2005

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

UK Presidency of the European Union: Extraordinary General Affairs and External Relations Council 18 October 2005

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): An extraordinary General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) was held on 18 October in Luxembourg. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary chaired the Council as Presidency. My hon. Friend the Minister for Trade and Investment represented the UK. I was also in attendance with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

WTO/DDA

The European Commission updated the Council on the state of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations and underlined that it was aiming to secure an outcome in line with the mandate provided by Member States. The Council confirmed its support for the Commission in this, and emphasised the importance of achieving a balanced outcome to the negotiations as a whole, including therefore non-agricultural market access and trade in services, as well as agriculture. The Council welcomed the Commission's commitment to strengthen the mechanisms for keeping the Council fully informed of developments in the negotiations. Council conclusions were agreed which reflected these points.

Avian Flu

The European Commission, Romania and Greece updated the Council on developments of reported avian flu and the measures they had taken. The Presidency noted the various measures already being taken to deal with the issue, and that the Council would return to it on a number of occasions during the UK Presidency. The Council concluded that it would pull together all these measures into a comprehensive action plan. Council conclusions were agreed which reflected these points.

South Asian Earthquake and Central American Tropical Storm Assistance

The Presidency expressed shock at the scale of the recent South Asian earthquake and reiterated its solidarity and sympathy with those affected. The Presidency called for an urgent EU response both politically and in humanitarian assistance and made a personal plea for Member States to provide as much assistance in kind as soon as possible. The European Commission highlighted that the Community Mechanism (MIC) had become operational the day after the South Asian earthquake with ECHO committing €3.6 million immediately with a further pledge of €10 million. The European Commission informed the Council that they were urgently looking at further funding for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the region. On tropical storm Stan, the Commission had been equally rapid in its response having given €1.7 million to El Salvador and a further €3 million for Guatemala. The Presidency agreed to discuss the EU's response to crises at the 21/22 November GAERC.

BBC World Service

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The BBC World Service has today announced a significant modernisation and reprioritisation of its services to enable it to build on its international pre-eminence. The full text of that announcement can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice.

The changes result from a thorough strategic review of its services carried out by the BBC World Service earlier this year. That review was conducted against the background of the BBC Charter Review Green Paper that was published in March 2005. A number of significant issues were considered in the course of the review. These included the very positive developments in both the political and the media environment in Central and Eastern Europe in the course of the last 15 years; an assessment of where BBC World Service vernacular language provision has had the greatest impact in recent years; developments in broadcast technology, changing audience preferences and the strategic importance of each of the present 43 language services currently provided.

The changes will lead to the closure of 11 vernacular radio services. The services are Czech, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak, Slovene, Bulgarian, Croatian, Portuguese for Brazil (radio programming only, online vernacular services will remain), Kazakh and Thai. The funding released will be reinvested in new technologies such as online, television and video products, including the creation of a BBC World Service Arabic TV service.

The changes will not affect the global role of BBC World Service. Online and radio services in English will continue to be available globally and will remain the foundation of the BBC World Service's news and information service. Vernacular radio services will be concentrated in areas where the media marketplace is less well developed and where the audiences have a greater need for impartial, independent sources of news and information.

Many of the services that will be closed had their roots in the 1940s and the issues and problems of that time. They continued to serve their audiences well through the Cold War years, offering them a lifeline of accurate and reliable news and information. Their presence during this period and beyond has contributed to the building of democracy and prosperity.

I endorse the BBC World Service's decision to refocus their vernacular output to ensure it maintains a strong presence in the places where there is the greatest need and where it will have the greatest impact. These changes will help BBC World Service to maintain and build on its position as the world's most respected international broadcaster.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 26 October 2005

DEFENCE

Operation TELIC (Battle Honour Awards)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): In June 2005, Her Majesty The Queen graciously approved the award of a Theatre Honour ('Iraq 2003') and the Battle Honour ('Al Basrah') for units of the British Army. Subsequently, individual Regiments and Corps applied to the Army Honours and Distinctions Committee for the award of these honours. Following receipt of the Committee's recommendations, the Executive Committee of the Army Board has sought Her Majesty's gracious approval, and we expect shortly to announce the approval of awards by Regiment and Corps.

HEALTH

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Liam Byrne): The annual report for 2004 is being published today and copies have been placed in the Library. The report covers research and development work carried out by or on behalf of any Government Department in relation to equipment that might increase the range of activities and independence or well being of disabled people.

The current report places such research in the context of the national service framework for long-term conditions and the green paper on adult social care and outlines the role of assistive technology in making independent living easier for older people and people with disabilities. The report describes the wide range of Government funded projects supporting the development, introduction and evaluation of assistive technology.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas): The Department for International Development (DFID) doubled the UK's funding to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) at the UK-hosted Replenishment Conference (5–6 September), from £51 million for 2006 and £51 million in 2007 to £100 million for 2006 and £100 million for 2007. The amount raised at the Replenishment Conference was US$ 3.7 billion of US$ 7.0 [1]billion that the Global Fund estimated it needs for 2006 and 2007. Our contribution amounted to some 10 per cent. of the total US$ 3.7 billion pledged at the Replenishment Conference. We will continue to encourage existing and new donors to contribute further to the Global Fund.

The UK is committed to ensuring that the Global Fund uses the money it receives as effectively as possible and that the global response to AIDS is improved. These key messages were reiterated at the Replenishment Conference in London. The additional UK contribution, which will help the Global Fund to provide a sustainable response to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, makes the UK the fourth largest donor overall to the Fund.

The UK will be spending £1.5 billion on tackling HIV and AIDS over the next three years, a large part of which will be spent in Africa. This includes the UK's contribution to the Global Fund and DFID's bilateral programmes, which support prevention, testing, counselling and the care of orphans. The UK accounted for 20 per cent. of all direct bilateral donor commitments to the fight against AIDS in 2004[2].

In addition the UK is providing an extra £8 million to UNAIDS for financial year 2005–06. This will help UNAIDS to advise countries on how to use their AIDS funding more effectively.

The UK will continue to contribute to international technical agencies that provide support to countries to develop and implement effective national plans to control TB and malaria. We will provide £12.5 million in core funding this year to the World Health Organisation, and have pledged £5 million over three years (2005–06–2007–08) to the Stop TB Partnership. In addition, the UK will provide £1 million to the Roll Back Malaria partnership this year, particularly to help coordinate the supply of mosquito nets and anti-malarial drugs.

[1] *Source:* GFATM: The Global Fund's First Replenishment 2006–07 Chair's Report 16 September 2005

[2] *Source:* (Resource Needs For An Expanded Response to AIDS in Low and Middle Income Countries) UNAIDS August 2005

WORK AND PENSIONS

Disabled People (Equality)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mrs. Anne McGuire): Yesterday, the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005 (SI 2966) were laid before Parliament. These regulations are made under powers in section 49D of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and take forward the Government's commitments, as set out in "Delivering Equality for Disabled People" (Cm 6255) to place prescribed public authorities under specific equality duties.

In my written ministerial statement on 21 July, *Official Report*, Column 169WS, I listed certain additional public bodies which, following the consultation, the Government intended to place under the duties. Further to those bodies, the Adult Learning Inspectorate, the British Educational Communications

and Technology Agency, the National College for School Leadership, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Teacher Training Agency will also be subject to the duties, as set out in the regulations.

In "Delivering Equality for Disabled People" the Government said they recognised the special position of schools, and the need to ensure that equality duties applied to schools were effective and proportionate. The regulations ensure that schools are required to publish equality schemes setting out how they will be carrying out their responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, combat harassment and promote greater equality for disabled people. However, in order to enable schools to build their new planning and reporting duties into their existing responsibilities, the regulations clarify that the scheme may form part of another document, and the start date for the specific duties as it will apply to primary schools in England, and to all schools in Wales, will be 2007.

The Government have long recognised the importance of clear and accessible statutory guidance in enabling the proper implementation of the public sector duties. Alongside the regulations, we have also laid before Parliament a statutory code of practice prepared by the Disability Rights Commission giving practical guidance to bodies exercising functions in England and Wales, and bodies exercising reserved functions in Scotland. Subject to Parliament's approval, the regulations and the Code will come into force in December this year, giving public bodies a full year to implement their responsibilities before the duties begin to come into force in December 2006.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 27 October 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Disabled Facilities Grant

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): I would like to make the following statement with regard to the progress of the Government's review of Disabled Facilities Grant. This is an interdepartmental review being conducted jointly between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills.

As part of that review an independent report of the DFG programme was commissioned from the University of Bristol. This is now complete and I am pleased to announce that it is being published today. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and sent to all local authorities. The report emphasises the importance that an effective housing adaptations service can play in helping disabled people live independent lives and confirms that the current programmes of Government assistance are making a very valuable contribution in this respect.

However the report also makes a large number of recommendations for change. The Government will consider these further over the next few months and will issue during the early part of 2006 a consultation paper which responds to these recommendations and sets out our proposals for change.

One of the important recommendations which the report makes is to remove the means test for DFG applications from families with a disabled child. This change has already been made in Northern Ireland and Wales. There has also been considerable public and parliamentary support for this change. I have therefore decided that this should be implemented in England as soon as the necessary secondary legislation can be made. I hope this can be brought forward to come into effect in December 2005.

In making the change I have to be certain that local authorities have adequate resources available to meet the additional demand. The Bristol report estimates that to exempt these cases from the means test will create an extra annual resource burden of £12 million on local authorities. However, we announced in September that the ODPM's ring-fenced budget for DFG would be substantially increased from the beginning of 2006–07. I am therefore satisfied that this increase will be sufficient to accommodate this important change.

I hope that the whole house welcomes this important enhancement to the DFG programme which will bring much needed relief to all those families who are struggling to support a disabled child.

Planning Regulations (Antennas, including Satellite Dishes)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): Today the Government are laying SI 2005–2935 to change the planning regulations for antennas, including satellite dishes.

In April 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued a consultation document, Satellite Dishes and Other Antennas, on possible changes to the planning regulations for all domestic antennas except TV aerials. This document proposed a number of options for change to the permitted development rights for buildings in England. We received a wide variety of responses, which we have since been considering.

Householders have a general permission, known as permitted development rights, to make certain modifications to their property. We intend to amend these regulations to take account of the wide variety of antenna technology now available, so that all types of microwave antennas, whether they are satellite dishes, MESH antennas, wireless antennas, or any other type of antenna, will be subject to the same permitted development regulations. This will make planning regulations consistent with the requirements of technological neutrality in the Electronic Communications Act 2003.

The changes will also make it easier for householders and businesses to access both digital or satellite television and wireless broadband services. However, these changes to the planning regulations are balanced to ensure that any adverse environmental impact is kept to a minimum, particularly in designated areas. Accordingly, there are restrictions as to the number, the size, and the location of antennas.

It is a condition of installing an antenna under both the current and revised regulations that it be sited in such a way so that it minimises its impact on the external appearance of the building. Furthermore, antennas no longer needed for reception or transmission purposes should be removed as soon as practicable.

Dwelling Houses and Buildings under 15 m

Under the revised planning regulations for dwelling houses and buildings under 15 m:

two antennas will be permitted;

the size of the antennas will be restricted;

the larger having a maximum of 100 cm in any linear direction and 35 litres cubic capacity by volume;

the smaller having a maximum of 60 cm and 35 litres cubic capacity by volume;

chimney-mounted antennas will also be restricted to a maximum of 60 cm and 35 litres cubic capacity by volume.

The antennas will have certain siting restrictions:

no antenna should protrude above the roof if the premises does not have a protruding chimney; and

if the premises has a protruding chimney, antennas may protrude up to 60 cm above the roof, or up to height of the chimney, whichever is the lower.

Buildings above 15 m in height

We do not propose to modify the permitted development rights that apply to these buildings significantly. Under the revised planning regulations:

the number of antennas will be limited to four;

the size of the antennas will be restricted to 130 cm in any linear direction and, up to 35 litres cubic capacity by volume;

chimney-mounted antennas will be limited to 60 cm and up to 35 litres cubic capacity by volume.

The antennas will have certain siting restrictions:

antennas should not exceed the highest part of the roof by more than 300 cm.

Designated Areas

The regulations for designated areas are more restrictive. Designated areas are those listed under Article 1(5) of Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (the GPDO). These areas are: the National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; conservation areas, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. In these areas, as well as the number, size, and siting restrictions made according to the height of the building, antennas should not be both facing and visible from a road or a broads waterway.

If a local planning authority considers an antenna is poorly sited and could reasonably be positioned less conspicuously, they can ask the owner to re-site the antenna at their own expense. If such a request is refused, the planning authority may then require an application for planning permission for which a charge is payable, or serve the householder with an enforcement notice requiring the siting of the antenna to be altered in a specified way.

HEALTH

18-week Patient Pathway

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The NHS Improvement Plan gave a commitment that by December 2008 no one will have to wait longer than 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to hospital treatment.

Today I am launching a listening exercise on the proposed principles and definitions that will underpin the 18 week commitment.

Between January and July 2005, 24 NHS Pilot sites worked with the Department of Health in a consultative exercise focusing on the patient, operational and information implications of the 18-week commitment, identifying the challenges in achieving this, and defining the delivery planning process. Clinical, managerial and technical specialists in the NHS all participated, providing valuable ideas on achieving the 18-week commitment.

Work has been identified for preparing a detailed delivery plan by early 2006. The next task is to obtain the views of the NHS and other stakeholders on the proposed principles and definitions around this delivery plan.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Performance Assessments 2004–05

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): Today I have published Police Performance Assessments 2004–05 for individual forces in England and Wales. This publication has been brought together by the Police Standards Unit (PSU) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to improve and integrate their assessment regimes to make performance information understandable and accessible. The Police Performance Assessments have replaced the previous police performance monitors, which were first published in February 2003. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

Tables have been introduced to provide an understandable summary of performance for a force across seven key performance areas. Forces are judged firstly against their peers using the clear judgments "excellent", "good", "fair" and "poor". A second judgment is made against their previous year's performance using the terms "improved", "stable" and "deteriorated". The publication is complemented by comprehensive information (including data and technical definitions) available via the internet.

The police performance assessments use the set of national measures for policing performance published in the National Policing Plan 2004–07. The assessments will undoubtedly develop in the future, for example, as we develop better ways of assessing performance in tackling anti-social behaviour and investigating organised crime. However, as the first assessment of this kind, the publication sets a benchmark for future policing performance. It will enable local communities to understand the performance of their force thereby promoting accountability and responsiveness. It will also allow forces with their police authorities to identify strengths and weaknesses thereby reducing the need for external inspections, reviews or other interventions.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, Denis Stanley is responsible for all aspects of electoral administration in Northern Ireland, including the conduct of all elections and referendums, as well as electoral registration. In accordance with section 14 of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962, the Chief Electoral Officer is required to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State.

I am pleased to announce that the annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland for the year 2004–05 has been laid before Parliament today. Copies are available in the Library.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Fraud Review

The Solicitor-General (Mr. Mike O'Brien): My right hon. Friend the Attorney General has made the following written ministerial statement:

"Fraud has been estimated to cost the economy at least £14 billion a year and is an increasing threat to our economy and society. It facilitates other crime such as terrorism.

In our manifesto the Government said that:

'We will overhaul laws on fraud and the way that fraud trials are conducted to update them for the 21st Century and to make them quicker and effective.'

Legislation is currently before Parliament to introduce a single offence of fraud; and I announced in June that the Government intend to implement Section 43 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 which would allow a limited number of very serious and complex fraud trials to be tried without a jury if both the trial judge and the Lord Chief Justice concur. The Order to implement section 43 will be laid today before both Houses.

But in addition to these worthwhile changes the Government have decided that our response to fraud must be strengthened further. To facilitate that an inter departmental review of fraud has been established which will report jointly to me and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, by late spring 2006. The review will consider the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution/punishment of fraud. It will consider the scope for improving the current arrangements with the objective of reducing the amount of fraud and minimising the harm it causes to the economy and wider society. The terms of reference are attached to this statement. The Review Team will consult widely with stakeholders in the public and private sectors before delivering its report, and representatives of the Fraud Advisory Panel and Financial Services Authority have agreed to join the Steering Group which will be chaired by one of my officials".

WORK AND PENSIONS

Cold Weather Payments

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): I am pleased to announce that, following advice from the Meteorological Office, the annual review of the Cold Weather Payments scheme has now been completed. Amending regulations were laid on 7 October and will come into force on 1 November, in time for the beginning of the winter period.

One of the weather stations used in the scheme last winter, Newcastle, is closing and two new weather stations are being introduced at Albemarle and Loftus to provide data for the scheme. Two postcode to weather station linkages have been changed on the advice of the Meteorological Office following representations made by hon. Members and others.

I have written to each of the hon. Members affected by these changes.

Cold Weather Payments are separate from, and in addition to, Winter Fuel Payments which are paid to eligible people from age 60.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 28 October 2005

DEFENCE

Challenge Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): I am pleased to announce the extension of the department's Veterans Challenge Fund. This Fund was established on 1 April 2003 for a fixed initial period of three years to provide a mechanism for MOD to pump prime activities which address an identifiable gap in the existing activity or knowledge supporting the Government's Veterans Programme. Some £2 million was allocated to the Fund over the three-year period.

I am delighted that the Challenge Fund has been successful in allowing the MOD to wholly or partly fund projects and support partners in a practical way. I am confident that the continuation of the fund, with a present allocation of £750,000 per year, will support a variety of projects that will benefit veterans. Further details on eligibility and the application process can be found at http://www.veteransagency.mod.uk/pdfolder/vasecpdfs/challenge.pdf/

HEALTH

Genetically Modified Maize

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): The Agriculture and Fisheries Council of the European Union met on 24–25 October and voted on a proposal to authorise food ingredients derived from the genetically modified maize line MON863. As the vote did not result in the necessary majority either for or against the proposal, the Regulatory Committee procedure for implementing powers requires that the proposal is passed back to the European Commission to adopt the implementing act.

The Government regret that it was necessary to vote on this authorisation, through a scrutiny override, before parliamentary scrutiny has been completed and before the debate recommended by the European Scrutiny Committee. The United Kingdom had previously supported this authorisation because there was adequate evidence that the necessary criteria for authorisation—namely safety, consumer information and nutritional quality—had been met. In the absence of a clear majority among member states at that stage, the decision was later referred to the Council with a deadline of three months for a further vote. It is unfortunate that this period coincided with the summer recess and it was therefore not possible to complete the scrutiny process before the vote. I wrote to the Chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee on 20 October setting out this position. The Government are, nonetheless, fully committed to the need for national Parliaments to have proper oversight of EU issues and the subject of the authorisation of food ingredients from MON863 maize will be debated in European Standing Committee in due course.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Race Relations Act

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): In light of the recent major increase in asylum claims by Eritreans, which does not seem to be justified by the country situation, I have made an authorisation under section 19D of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as inserted by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) of three months' duration. This authorisation enables staff in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate to subject persons of Eritrean nationality or national origin to more intensive questioning, and their applications to enter or remain in the United Kingdom or for asylum to more rigorous investigation, than arrivals of other nationalities or national origins. The purpose of the authorisation is to gather intelligence about the pattern of arrival of Eritreans or entrants of Eritrean national origin.

We will review the continued need for this authorisation before its expiry. In addition, the independent Race Monitor appointed under section 19E of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) will submit a report to the Home Secretary for submission to Parliament on the likely effect of authorisations made by Ministers and on how they are operated in practice by officials.

A copy of the authorisation has been placed in the House Library.

PRIME MINISTER

Appointment of Special Representative

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce the appointment of Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean as my special representative to assist the Government's efforts to conclude memoranda of understanding and associated arrangements, to facilitate the deportation from the UK of foreign nationals who represent a threat to the national security or whose presence in the UK is not conducive to the public good, with a number of middle east and north African countries.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 31 October 2005

DEFENCE

Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): On 28 October I published the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report And Accounts 2004–05. It combines the Department's Annual Performance Report and Departmental Resource Accounts in a single document that provides a comprehensive overview of the MOD's financial and non-financial performance. For the second successive year the Comptroller and Auditor General has approved the accounts without qualification.

The report shows that once again the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence delivered what they were required and resourced to do during a busy and challenging year. It reflects the broad and diverse range of operations and tasks undertaken during the year, and the Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence's continuing vision of being a force for good in the world. It also details the sizeable progress the Ministry of Defence has made towards achieving the efficiency targets set by Her Majesty's Treasury in the 2002 and 2004 Spending Reviews, and the considerable progress already made in delivering the capabilities and reformed force structure set out in the July 2004 Command Paper "Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities".

Copies of the annual report and accounts have been placed in the Library of the House. It is also available online from the Department's internet site at www.mod.uk.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Local Government Finance

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): On 19 May 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published a consultation paper asking for views on options for the principles to be used in amending the 2003–04 Local Government Finance Report and the 2004–05 Local Government Finance Report in the light of revised population statistics. This consultation exercise closed on 10 August 2004.

After consideration of the views expressed by local authorities in consultation, we decided to postpone the issuing of the Amending Report for 2004–05 until after the mid-2004 population estimates had been published to ensure that all possible revisions to the data used in the 2004–05 settlement were included. This decision was announced on 18 November 2004.

Due to the postponement of the 2004–05 Amending Report, an Amending Report for 2005–06 will now also be required, and we are now publishing full details of our proposals for the 2004–05 and 2005–06 Amending Reports. Copies of all related documents have been placed in the Vote Office and the Library of the House. They are also available on the ODPM website at: www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0607/grant.htm.

This announcement launches a period of consultation on the Amending Reports for 2004–05 and 2005–06. The consultation will close on the same date as the forthcoming consultation on proposals for the 2006–07 local government finance settlement, the date for which will be announced in due course. This will allow local authorities some additional time to consider the effects of the Amending Reports in their budgeting proposals.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Environment Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I attended and chaired the meeting of the Environment Council in Luxembourg on 17 October 2005. I was accompanied by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Elliot Morley, in the UK seat.

The agenda consisted of three substantive items: policy debates on the REACH chemicals legislation and on better regulation, and agreement of conclusions on climate change.

On the REACH chemicals dossier, Ministers were invited to comment on a compromise text prepared by the UK presidency. There was widespread support for the balance struck in the text between achieving a high level of protection for human health and the environment, and limiting the impacts on industry, and several Ministers stressed their view that this balance should not be changed in the final compromise. Environment Ministers, and also the Commission, strongly supported the UK Presidency's aim of reaching political agreement on REACH at the November Competitiveness Council. Ministers' views were also sought on two specific issues within the dossier, in order to inform the continuing negotiation. The Council was fairly evenly split on the question of whether substances in articles should be subject to a separate, specific regime. The final question was o n the notification of substances of very high concern, where the Presidency approach was widely supported although a number of Member States thought there was scope for an exemption where exposure of humans and the environment to such substances could be excluded.

Council adopted a set of conclusions on climate change. The conclusions underlined the EU's commitment to delivering on its Kyoto Protocol targets and its financial commitments on climate change, and agreed our approach for the forthcoming COP11-COP/MOP1 in Montreal. We looked forward to the adoption of the Marrakech accords, and expressed our wish to obtain agreement on a process for beginning negotiations at Montreal on a post-2012 framework.

Also in relation to climate change, we heard a point from Poland under Other Business that suggested some issues for review in relation to the EU's emissions trading scheme.

At lunch we were joined by the Chair of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, Karl-Heinz Florenz, and began our discussion of "Better Regulation", which was continued in a formal Council debate after

lunch. There was strong support within the Council for the view that better regulation tools, and in particular impact assessments, could help in delivering better environmental outcomes in the most effective way. It helps to provide a mechanism for the integration of environmental considerations into all Community policies, as the Treaties require. A number of delegations noted the importance of considering the costs of inaction in evaluating the options, and there was widespread agreement that impact assessment must assist in political decision-making, not replace or delay it.

A relatively short list of AOB points included, in addition to the emissions trading item above, information from the Commission on its communication on tackling the climate change impacts of aviation emissions, and on progress on its proposal for a review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Spain and Portugal reported on the 5th meeting of the Ibero-American Forum of Environment Ministers, and the Netherlands raised the issue of the need for adequate funding for environmental matters in the 7th Research Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

Denmark requested an urgent future discussion on the potential benefits of, and the need for further EU funded research on, genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Luxembourg submitted a paper calling for a discussion focused on the need for change to the EU's approvals regime for GMOs. The Commission suggested that a full debate would be best timed after a WTO hearing on GMOs expected early next year. The Presidency concluded that a significant number of delegations wanted a debate, and it was agreed that the Commission would produce a short paper as the basis for a short, initial discussion at the 2 December Environment Council.

Avian Influenza

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): In my oral statement to the House on Wednesday 26 October I said that the Chief Veterinary Officer and I had ordered a general review of our quarantine arrangements and procedures to be undertaken. I am pleased to announce today that Professor Nigel Dimmock, Emeritus Professor of Virology at Warwick University has agreed to chair the review.

The terms of reference for the review are:

> to review avian quarantine arrangements and procedures for captive birds; and
>
> to make recommendations on any changes needed to policies or procedures, including guidance, to improve biosecurity, compliance with relevant legislation and clarity of accountabilities

The review will be led by Professor Dimmock and the membership will be drawn from independent experts in a range of fields including virology, logistics, veterinary science and animal behaviour. The review team will examine the current arrangements for the quarantine of captive birds; they will be able to talk to practitioners and experts in the field as well as examining existing guidance and procedures. They may also want to visit quarantine premises.

Debby Reynolds, the Chief Vet, and I have asked Professor Dimmock to report his findings as speedily as possible. We hope to receive his report, which we will publish, within around one month.

I am most grateful to Professor Dimmock for taking on this important task. The advice of his expert review team will enable us to ensure that our avian quarantine arrangements are as up to date and effective as they can be in the face of the significant challenges we face from the rapid worldwide spread of highly pathogenic zoonotic disease.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): On 26 October, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad of Iran addressed a conference in Tehran on "A World Without Zionism". In his speech, he is reported to have called for "Israel to be wiped from the map", and said that "the Islamic world *will not let its historic enemy live in its heartland*", "the new wave of (attacks) in Palestine . . . will erase this stigma from the Islamic world" and that "anybody who recognises Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation's fury".

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in his press conference at the European Council at Hampton Court on 27 October, these sentiments are completely unacceptable. I welcome the clear condemnation by the United Nations Security Council on 28 October and the statement by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, expressing his dismay. They have spoken for the world. Israel is a long-standing member of the United Nations with the same rights and obligations as every other. Under the United Nations Charter, Iran, like other members of the organisation, has undertaken to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Mr Annan has also said he intends to place at the top of his agenda when he visits Iran in the next few weeks the Middle East Peace Process and the right of all states in the area to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts offered. I welcome that.

At the informal summit of European Union Heads of Government at Hampton Court on 27 October, the Presidency issued the following statement:

> "EU leaders meeting at Hampton Court today condemned in the strongest terms the comments in respect of the State of Israel attributed to President Ahmedinejad of Iran. Calls for violence, and for the destruction of any state, are manifestly inconsistent with any claim to be a mature and responsible member of the international community.
>
> Such comments will cause concern about Iran's role in the region, and its future intentions. The fact that these comments were made on the same day as a horrific attack on Israeli civilians should reinforce the lesson that incitement to violence, and the terrorism that it breeds, are despicable and unacceptable acts. For its part, the EU remains committed to a solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute based on the principle of two states living side-by-side in peace and security. It urges all parties in the region to do their utmost to bring that vision to fulfilment".

In addition, on 27 October, the Foreign Office summoned the Iranian Chargé d'Affaires in London on behalf of the European Union to protest at the remarks. Many of our European partners and other countries have done likewise.

We welcome too the international community's forthright condemnation, and their reaffirmation of the right of Israel to exist. We welcome particularly the statements by officials of the Palestinian Authority and other governments in the region.

We remain profoundly concerned at Iran's links to groups trying to undermine peace in the Middle East through violence, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad which claimed responsibility for the horrific attack at Hadera in Israel on 26 October. The EU has said that Iran's policies towards the Middle East Peace Process and terrorism are among the factors it will consider when formulating its policy towards Iran.

President Ahmadinejad's remarks also underline the imperative for Iran to take steps to address international concerns about the intentions of its nuclear programme, and to provide objective guarantees that that programme is for solely peaceful purposes. We call on Iran to meet urgently and in full the requests of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors, to suspend fully all of its uranium enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, and return to talks with the E3/EU on the basis of the Paris Agreement.

HEALTH

Meeting of Health Ministers in Ottawa on 24–25 October 2005

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The Canadian Minister of Health, Ujjal Dosanjh, convened an international meeting of Ministers of Health in Ottawa on 24–25 October to discuss global pandemic influenza readiness. I attended for the United Kingdom.

There were Health Ministers and delegates from 30 countries covering all parts of the world.

There was participation at the highest level from a number of UN and other international agencies dealing with various sectoral aspects of preparing for pandemic flu, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Bank, and the recently appointed UN Coordinator for pandemic influenza. The European Commission was also represented.

The purpose of the meeting was to raise the political priority attached to international collaboration in preparing for a human influenza pandemic, to stress the need for transparency between countries and institutions, and to give full support to the leading role of multilateral institutions.

Four themes were discussed:

- The need for inter-sectoral collaboration on animal and human health issues;
- Improving surveillance and capacity-building;
- Vaccine and anti-viral development, supply and access;
- Risk communication.

A communiqué was agreed. A copy has been placed in the Library. It sets out in more detail the priority areas agreed on for further action, and lists some key current and forthcoming activities round the world. A list of all participating Ministers is attached to the communiqué.

The main conclusions were:

- There is a need to distinguish between avian flu (birds), seasonal flu and pandemic flu;
- A call for increased research on avian influenza viruses, including their ability to spread from animals to humans;
- There is a need to increase capacity for early detection, diagnosis and response, and for exchange of information between the agriculture and health sectors at the local, national and international levels;
- The need for expansion and integration of the network of relevant WHO collaborating centres and FAO-OIE reference laboratories, for the rapid identification of virus strains;
- The need to develop bio-security guidelines for the poultry sector to help farming communities ensure appropriate animal and public health standards for the raising, handling and transporting of potentially flu-bearing animals;
- The need to develop effective partnerships with media and other key stakeholders for the exchange and dissemination of information.

Ministers recognised the need to build capacity and plan in all countries, facilitated by appropriate national and international investments and resource sharing. But all stressed the need to work through and with multi-lateral organisations. In particular, they welcomed the upcoming WHO/FAO/World Bank meeting on avian and pandemic influenza in Geneva from 7–9 November, where many of the issues they managed to highlight in a relatively short meeting will be looked at further.

The meeting was successful in raising political awareness and commitment across all WHO regions of the need both for avian influenza control measures as well as the need to strengthen preparedness for pandemic influenza in humans.

Ministers noted a number of activities already ongoing or planned in regions around the world, and some additional activities were proposed, including a meeting next year of Regulatory Authorities to address common regulatory challenges to expedite vaccine registration and availability.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Grant Amending Reports

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library a copy of the draft Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2004–05 (Amending Report 2005–06) and the draft Police Grant Report (England & Wales) 2005–06 (Amending Report 2005–06). Last year we laid before the House an Amending Report for 2003–04 to take account of changes to Office of National Statistics (ONS) population data. I also announced that there would be a further Amending Report for 2004–05 this year that would similarly take account of changes to ONS population data. The purpose of the 2005–06 Amending Report is to take account of adjustments to pensions' projections for Derbyshire and Lancashire used to determine 2005–06 pension allocations.

The consultation period on the proposed Amending Reports will end on the same date as the consultation on proposals for the 2006–07 police and local government finance settlements to be put before Parliament later this year. This will allow local police authorities some additional time to consider the effects of the Amending Report in their budgeting proposals. My hon. Friend, the Minister for Local Government, will make a statement in due course about the Government's proposals for Local Government Finance in 2006–07. Authorities may wish to take this into account in considering their response to this consultation.

Police Authority	*2004–05 Original Allocation*[1] *£m*	*2004–05 Amended Allocation*[1] *£m*	*Change between original and amended 2004–05* *£m*	*%*
English Shire forces				
Avon & Somerset	162.2	162.2	0.0	0.0%
Bedfordshire	62.1	61.9	-0.2	-0.3%
Cambridgeshire	73.4	73.6	0.2	0.2%
Cheshire	107.2	107.5	0.2	0.2%
Cleveland	86.8	87.0	0.2	0.2%
Cumbria	59.6	59.4	-0.2	-0.4%
Derbyshire	101.2	101.2	0.0	0.0%
Devon & Cornwall	166.7	166.7	0.0	0.0%
Dorset	63.6	63.6	0.0	0.0%
Durham	84.2	83.7	-0.5	-0.5%
Essex	160.9	160.9	0.0	0.0%
Gloucestershire	58.9	58.9	0.0	0.0%
Hampshire	190.5	190.5	0.0	0.0%
Hertfordshire	104.8	104.8	0.0	0.0%
Humberside	114.6	114.8	0.2	0.2%
Kent	182.6	182.6	0.0	0.0%
Lancashire	182.9	183.2	0.4	0.2%
Leicestershire	102.0	101.7	-0.3	-0.3%
Lincolnshire	60.6	60.6	0.0	0.0%
Norfolk	82.2	81.7	-0.5	-0.6%
North Yorkshire	72.7	72.7	0.0	0.0%
Northamptonshire	64.3	64.4	0.1	0.2%
Nottinghamshire	127.6	127.0	-0.6	-0.4%
Staffordshire	109.2	109.2	0.0	0.0%
Suffolk	66.0	66.0	0.0	0.0%
Surrey	88.2	88.2	0.0	0.0%
Sussex	158.1	158.1	0.0	0.0%
Thames Valley	212.6	212.6	0.0	0.0%
Warwickshire	49.8	49.8	0.0	0.0%
West Mercia	107.7	107.7	0.0	0.0%
Wiltshire	60.6	60.5	-0.1	-0.2%
English Metropolitan forces				
Greater Manchester	393.2	394.0	0.8	0.2%
Merseyside	248.4	248.9	0.5	0.2%
Northumbria	221.4	221.8	0.5	0.2%
South Yorkshire	178.0	176.9	-1.0	-0.6%
West Midlands	399.3	400.1	0.8	0.2%
West Yorkshire	298.9	299.5	0.6	0.2%
London forces				
GLA—Police	1822.0	1826.2	4.3	0.2%
City of London[2]	106.6	106.6	0.0	0.0%
English Total	6991.6	6997.0	5.4	0.1%
Welsh forces				
Dyfed-Powys[3]	50.9	50.9	0.0	0.0%
Gwent[3]	71.8	71.5	-0.3	-0.4%
North Wales[3]	76.4	76.1	-0.2	-0.3%
South Wales[3]	168.2	168.3	0.1	0.0%
Welsh total	367.3	366.9	-0.4	-0.1%
Total	7358.9	7363.8	4.9	0.1%

Notes:

1. Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.

2. RSG figures for the City are allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions.

3. Welsh figures are provisional. Allocation figures are inclusive of floor payments for Dyfed-Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales.

Police Authority	2005–06 Original Allocation[1] £m	2005–06 Amended Allocation[1] £m	Change between original and amended 2005–06 £m	%
English Shire forces				
Avon & Somerset	170.0	169.9	-0.1	-0.1%
Bedfordshire	65.1	65.0	-0.2	-0.2%
Cambridgeshire	77.9	77.9	0.0	0.0%
Cheshire	111.3	111.5	0.2	0.2%
Cleveland	90.9	90.9	0.1	0.1%
Cumbria	62.1	61.9	-0.2	-0.4%
Derbyshire	105.0	105.2	0.3	0.3%
Devon & Cornwall	173.0	173.0	0.0	0.0%
Dorset	66.0	66.0	0.0	0.0%
Durham	87.8	87.3	-0.5	-0.5%
Essex	167.0	167.0	0.0	0.0%
Gloucestershire	61.1	61.1	0.0	0.0%
Hampshire	197.7	197.7	0.0	0.0%
Hertfordshire	108.8	108.8	0.0	0.0%
Humberside	118.9	119.1	0.2	0.2%
Kent	189.5	189.5	0.0	0.0%
Lancashire	190.8	191.0	0.2	0.1%
Leicestershire	107.7	107.5	-0.2	-0.2%
Lincolnshire	63.4	63.3	0.0	0.0%
Norfolk	85.9	85.6	-0.3	-0.4%
North Yorkshire	75.4	75.4	0.0	0.0%
Northamptonshire	67.8	67.8	0.0	0.0%
Nottinghamshire	133.3	133.0	-0.4	-0.3%
Staffordshire	113.3	113.3	0.0	0.0%
Suffolk	68.5	68.5	0.0	0.0%
Surrey	91.5	91.5	0.0	0.0%
Sussex	164.0	164.0	0.0	0.0%
Thames Valley	220.6	220.6	0.0	0.0%
Warwickshire	51.8	51.8	0.0	0.0%
West Mercia	111.8	111.8	0.0	0.0%
Wiltshire	62.9	62.8	-0.1	-0.2%
English Metropolitan forces				
Greater Manchester	412.5	412.8	0.3	0.1%
Merseyside	257.7	258.3	0.5	0.2%
Northumbria	232.2	232.3	0.2	0.1%
South Yorkshire	185.7	184.6	-1.1	-0.6%
West Midlands	426.5	426.5	0.0	0.0%
West Yorkshire	313.6	313.8	0.2	0.1%
London forces				
GLA—Police	1927.8	1928.8	1.0	0.1%
City of London[2]	112.5	112.5	-0.1	0.0%
English Total	7329.1	7329.2	0.1	0.0%
Welsh forces				
Dyfed-Powys[3]	52.2	52.3	0.0	0.0%
Gwent[3]	74.1	73.8	-0.3	-0.4%
North Wales[3]	78.3	78.0	-0.2	-0.3%
South Wales[3]	174.5	174.6	0.1	0.0%
Welsh total	379.1	378.7	-0.5	-0.1%
Total	7708.2	7707.8	-0.4	0.0%

Notes:

1. Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.
2. RSG figures for the City are allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions.
3. Welsh figures are provisional. Allocation figures are inclusive of floor payments for Dyfed-Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales.

PRIME MINISTER

EU Heads of State or Government (Hampton Court)

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The purpose of the Informal Meeting of EU Heads of State or Government on 27 October was to set a clear direction on how Europe responds to the challenge of globalisation. There is a strong sense in the European Union that we need to reconnect Europe with the concerns of its citizens and a strong feeling among the leaders of the EU that we have to get Europe moving in the right direction.

The European Commission produced a paper for the meeting—European Values in the Globalised World—that sets out very clearly: the challenge facing Europe; what Member States should do in response; and, what might most effectively be done at European level. There was broad agreement to both the analysis in the paper and its ideas on the way forward.

The consensus was that while Europe sometimes needs to do more and sometimes needs to do less, in each case it needs to do it better.

There was strong support for the Commission proposals to reduce the amount of regulation and to ensure that future regulation does not damage the competitiveness of the European economy.

We also discussed the Commission's proposal for a globalisation adjustment fund. This is not about bailing-out failing firms or standing in the way of globalisation, but about helping those individuals affected by change to retrain and to acquire new skills. The Commission will now develop a full proposal on this.

EU leaders also agreed further work in some key areas for Europe's future competitiveness, economic prosperity and security. The Commission, the UK Presidency and the incoming Austrian Presidency will decide how to take work forward in the areas of:

Research and Development: We need to encourage greater business and industrialinvestment in areas such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, and Pharmaceuticals so that Europecan have world-beating companies in the technologies of the future. And we need to look atpossible new ways of supporting innovation, for example through the venture capital market orexploring the scope for increased European Investment Bank funding.

Universities: We need to find ways of raising the level of our universities, in particular by developing stronger links between universities and business.

Addressing the demographic challenge: We need to share practical solutions for family-friendly policies, better child care, and work life balance provisions. We also need to tackle barriers to the greater participation of older workers in the labour market.

Energy: The Commission paper makes clear that global demand is increasing while supply remains tight. We need to: diversify the sources of our energy; develop a properly integrated European Grid and a genuinely open energy market; ensure a coherent and operational approach to the EU's relationship with major energy suppliers, for example Russia and OPEC; and, put energy efficiency and clean technologies at the heart of our agenda.

We also agreed that the Commission, building on the Hague Programme, should look at further work on illegal immigration, crime and security. Taking account of recent Spanish and French ideas on tackling illegal immigration, we need to work more effectively in partnership with source and transit countries, particularly Sub-Saharan and North Africa. We shall: hold an EU-African Ministerial conference on migration issues; strengthen our border controls, including through the use of latest technology, for example biometrics; accelerate plans for a rapid reaction capability of immigration officers; and, make sure that EU funding and development aid are more strategically targeted.

On crime and security, we must work more effectively with countries outside the EU on Justice and Home Affairs issues, such as terrorism and human and drug trafficking. We shall develop an EU counter-terrorism strategy focused on: preventing radicalisation; protecting our infrastructure; and, ensuring better co-operation and exchange of information so that our law enforcement can effectively pursue terrorists and respond to attacks.

In these areas there will be an interim report to the December European Council, and final reports during the Austrian Presidency in the first half of next year.

Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union, working with the Presidency, will take forward work on the CFSP aspects of defence and security. We shall look to improve our capabilities by: increasing levels of research spending; exploiting opportunities for research collaboration; tackling capability gaps (air to air refuelling, heavy lift); and, collaborating as partners on training. We shall ensure that our crisis management structures can meet new demands on them including responding to natural disasters. We shall look to increase CFSP funding. We shall bring forward a comprehensive EU strategy for Africa in December.

As Presidency, the Government also made clear that agreeing a broad direction for Europe's economic development, and some priorities for action at a Community level, would help to set the context for agreeing the next financial perspective for Europe's budget from 2007 to 2013. We shall try to reach agreement on this at the December European Council.

Finally, EU Leaders agreed three statements at the meeting:

Iran: We condemned in the strongest terms the comments in respect of the State of Israel attributed to President Ahmadinejad of Iran. Calls for violence, and for the destruction of any State, are manifestly inconsistent with any claim to be a mature and responsible member of the international community, and raise serious concerns about Iran's role in the region and its future intentions.

Syria: We welcomed the report of the UN International Investigation Commission under Judge Detlev Mehlis and expressed our full support for the UN Security Council's determination to see justice done in this case.

South Asian Earthquake: We expressed our sympathy and solidarity for all those affected by the South Asian earthquake, and pledged to do all that we can to help with this on-going tragedy as winter approaches.

I have placed copies of the Commission paper and the statements in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRANSPORT

A303 Stonehenge Scheme

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I announced in July that because of the very substantial increase in the estimated cost of the proposed Stonehenge tunnel there would be a detailed review of the options to ease congestion on the A303 and improve the setting around Stonehenge.

I am announcing today the terms of reference and working arrangements for a review of the options. A copy of the terms of reference has been placed in the Library of the House.

There will be an opportunity for everyone with an interest in this important issue to contribute to the review process with a full public consultation beginning next January.

The review will carefully assess a number of options together with the results of the public consultation exercise before making recommendations to Government early next summer.

I hope that it will then be possible to decide on an option in keeping with the special requirements of the location that is realistic, affordable and deliverable.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Perth and Kinross Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Perth and Kinross Council today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Perth and Kinross Council administered some £24 million in housing benefits, about 11.6 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. The council had made significant improvements in the time taken to process new claims from 71 days in the second quarter of 2004–05 to 48 days by the end of 2004–05. However, this was still within the bottom quartile of performance for all councils.

Delays were occurring at all stages of the claims process. These were most significant in registering claims, identifying the need for further information and referring appropriate cases to the Rent Officer within statutory time limits.

Inaccurate performance was being reported against the Statutory Performance Indicator for the speed of processing changes of circumstances. The council was reporting an average of eight days to process a change yet the findings from a sample of cases showed that it was taking an average of 26.5 days.

Quality issues were identified in 30 per cent. of the cases sampled. Benefit had been paid on incomplete claim forms, incorrect dates had been used resulting in underpayment of benefit, and requests for backdating had been overlooked.

Inadequate control and poor monitoring of performance meant that members and senior officers had insufficient assurance about true levels of performance. This was compounded by a failure to implement audit recommendations.

Further assurance and internal security issues were found in the quality of verification, post opening arrangements, recruitment and vetting of benefits staff, procedural guidance and management checking.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Tandridge District Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Tandridge District Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Tandridge District Council administered some £11 million in housing benefits, about 28 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. In June 2005, BFI carried out an inspection on Tandridge District Council's administration of overpayments.

Inspectors found there was a great deal of commitment and professionalism in the council's efforts to administer overpayments, together with a determination to improve performance. Good practices enabled the council to recover 16 per cent. of outstanding overpayment debts in the first quarter of 2005–06 alone.

However, the Council did not always use the correct effective date when calculating overpayments, and some claims could have been suspended more promptly to limit overpayments. Decision letters to benefit customers need to be improved, as they did not always indicate when overpayments were recoverable.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (West Dunbartonshire Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on West Dunbartonshire Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, West Dunbartonshire Council administered some £41 million in housing benefits, about 22 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. The council was selected for inspection of its counter-fraud arrangements because it reported to the Department that it had not achieved any sanctions between April 2003 and March 2005.

BFI found that the council's overall performance in countering fraud was poor. Although the council had an anti-fraud strategy the management structure of the benefits service did not create a strong counter-fraud environment or focus and there was a lack of management control over the counter-fraud work that was done.

West Dunbartonshire Council acknowledged its shortcomings in this area and is committed to improving performance, including developing an action plan to address the recommendations made in BFFs report.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Dacorum Borough Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Dacorum Borough Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Dacorum Borough Council administered some £29.5 million in housing benefits, about 24.5 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

In 2004–05 the council was taking an average of 63 days to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit and had significant backlogs of work. The introduction of a new benefits IT system in 2003 and the absence of expert full-time staff had caused problems and the backlogs and underlying reasons for them were never fully addressed. Effective recruitment since

late 2004 has led to improvements and the average processing time for new claims was 42 days for the first quarter of 2005–06 and the backlogs are now cleared.

Good practices included adopting the Department's Verification Framework from April 2005, monitoring workflow, and prioritising changes of circumstances to reduce overpayments. However, processing changes of circumstances deteriorated from an average of 14 days in 2004–05 to 25 days in the first quarter of 2005–06.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Aberdeen City Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Aberdeen City Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05, Aberdeen City Council administered some £49 million in housing benefits, about 9 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. The inspection covered Aberdeen City Council's administration of overpayments.

The council displayed many strengths including: an excellent quality checking regime; 90 per cent correct classification of overpayments; calculating overpayments correctly, within 14 days; correctly deciding whom overpayments should be recovered from; and a good audit trail.

More could be done to recover large debts from housing associations and improvements were needed in the control of overpayments work and the council's write-off procedures.

The council is working with BFI's Performance Development Team to improve its action plan to recover overpayments.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Pathways to Work

The Minister for Employment and Welfare Reform (Margaret Hodge): The Pathways to Work model was launched in seven Jobcentre Plus Districts in October 2003 and April 2004. These Districts were:

Derbyshire

Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute

Bridgend, Rhondda, Cynon and Taff

East Lancashire

Somerset

Gateshead and South Tyneside

Essex

I would like to update colleagues on the very encouraging results from the pilots and announce implementation dates for the next phases of rollout.

We are seeing an 8 percentage point increase in the number of people coming off incapacity benefit within six months. This remains an early tentative but extremely encouraging finding. The evidence from the Pathways to Work pilots continues to far exceed our expectations. The number of people with a health condition or disability in the seven pilots who have found work now exceeds 17,000. Over 14,000 incapacity benefit customers have voluntarily accessed some element of the choices package to help them move back towards work. This includes 6,660 people who have attended the innovative Condition Management Programme, delivered through our successful partnership with the Department of Health, NHS and Primary Care Trusts.

Overall, more than 21 per cent. of all new customers who have a Work Focused Interview go on to access choices provision. Pathways to Work is making a real difference to the lives of people on incapacity benefit. We are undertaking a rigorous evaluation of the programme and that evaluation will inform our programme.

In the December 2004 Pre-Budget Report my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the expansion of Pathways to Work to an additional 14 Jobcentre Plus districts. These Districts serve Local Authority areas with the highest concentrations of incapacity benefit customers. This will allow us to focus resources on those areas where Pathways to Work will have the greatest impact.

The expansion will be implemented in three phases from October 2005 through to October 2006.

I can therefore announce that the first phase of this expansion has today been launched in the following Jobcentre Plus Districts:

Cumbria

Glasgow

Lancashire West

Tees Valley.

The remaining Districts to follow next year are:

From 24 April 2006: Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster; City of Sunderland; County Durham; Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire; Liverpool and the Wirral; Greater Manchester Central; Swansea Bay and West Wales;

From 30 October 2006: Eastern Valleys; Greater Mersey; Staffordshire.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Wansbeck District Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Wansbeck District Council was published today and copies have been placed in the Library.

In 2004–05 Wansbeck District Council administered some £15 million in housing benefits, about 49.5 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. The council's overall performance in administering housing benefit and council tax benefit met minimum requirements.

Strengths included the speedy processing of new claims and good access for customers at six "Infopoints". Infopoints had been developed through consultation with local communities and were in locations that best supported local people. More training for Infopoint staff was needed to improve their

knowledge of housing benefit and council tax benefit procedures so more enquiries could be answered at the first point of contact and ensure that claim forms had been correctly completed.

There were shortcomings in other key areas. The Verification Framework had not been fully introduced; there was little effective use of management information and limited management control of counter-fraud investigation activity. There were significant delays in the identification and processing of requests for reconsideration and appeals. These need to be better monitored and controlled.

Communication with landlords was ineffective. There was no liaison forum and landlords had not been informed of legislative changes.

Counter-fraud investigations had not always been carried out in accordance with legislation or Departmental guidance. An IT system has been used since April 2004 to help with the classification and recovery of overpayment debt but much old debt remains unrecovered.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the report and may ask the council for proposals in response to BFI's findings.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 1 November 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I chaired the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 and 25 October for the agriculture items on the agenda. The Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Bradshaw), represented the United Kingdom and chaired the Council for the fisheries items. The Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for South Dorset (Jim Knight), represented the United Kingdom for fisheries items. Also in attendance was the Scottish Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Ross Finnie.

The Council reached unanimous political agreement on a regulation for a recovery plan for stocks of Southern hake and Norway lobster in the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian peninsula.

The Council also reached unanimous political agreement on a draft regulation and set of negotiating directives on forest law, enforcement, governance and trade, which will allow the EU to prohibit the import of illegally logged timber from third countries that sign up to a partnership agreement with the EU.

The Council held an exchange of views on the preparation of the annual negotiations for the 2006 fisheries agreement between the Community and Norway in order to give the Commission a political mandate for conducting the negotiations. The debate focused on the issues of how many fish the EU and Norway can catch in each other's waters and possible future joint management of shared stocks.

Over lunch on Monday, Fisheries Ministers held a constructive discussion on improving Council working methods with regard to the annual agreement of total allowable catches and fishing quotas. A number of ideas were put forward by member states and the Commission will now work up proposals for presentation during 2006.

In the absence of a qualified majority in favour or against, the Council was unable to reach decisions on the Commission's proposal to prohibit a Greek ban on the marketing of genetically modified seed variety MON 810 and on Commission proposals for authorisations of the use of maize varieties GA21 and MON 863 in food. In the absence of Council decisions, therefore, the Commission is now free to implement its proposals under its own competence.

The Council held a further discussion on Commission proposals to reform the EU sugar regime. Further high level discussions will take place to prepare the ground for trying to secure a deal at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 22 to 24 November.

The Council discussed the current round of WTO negotiations informally over lunch and, at the request of France, afterwards as a formal agenda item. The presidency concluded that the Council had reached a united position in support of the Commission's approach.

Under any other business, the Fisheries Commissioner informed the Council of progress in setting up regional advisory councils.

The Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection presented a report on the operation of Regulation 1774/02 setting out the use and disposal of animal by-products. He felt that generally the regulation had worked well and been satisfactorily applied in most member states, but he identified some areas of improvement for consideration.

He also gave an update on the recent cases of avian influenza in Europe and announced that the Commission would be tabling a proposal at Standing Committee on 25 October to ban the import of wild captive birds.

The Agriculture Commissioner presented her communication on simplification and better regulation for the common agriculture policy. It aims to improve clarity and reduce administrative burdens for farmers, leading to more effective implementation of the CAP. The plan proposed a process of consultation, culminating in a more detailed action plan next year. I welcomed the report and said that the presidency hoped to return to the issue at the December Council.

France drew the attention of the Council to its case that the term shallots should apply only to specimens grown from bulbs, rather than seeds. The issue is currently the subject of a legal dispute between France and the Netherlands. The Commission explained that it had been working with both countries to find a solution.

Greece supported by Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Slovenia, expressed concern at the Commission's intention to open import quotas for olive oil in response to a shortage in the EU. The Commission said it would take a decision after consulting its advisory committee.

In the margins of Council the Commission and I held trilateral discussions with Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Belgium, Finland, The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Romania, France, Italy, Malta and Luxembourg to discuss the Commission's sugar reform proposals.

HEALTH

Informal Meeting of EU Health Ministers

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The United Kingdom Presidency hosted an informal meeting of Health Ministers of the European Union on 20 and 21 October chaired by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health.

The main areas of discussion were:

Pandemic flu preparedness

Values and common principles in healthcare systems

EU patient mobility

EU Health Ministers held an important discussion on pandemic flu preparedness. They dealt with three issues:

Avian flu, where the World Health Organisation stressed that the risk in Europe is very low for the general population

Seasonal flu, which we are dealing with in the usual way

The risk of pandemic flu

The WHO confirmed that there had been no increase in the level of risk for pandemic flu, but of course we need to ensure that we are properly prepared in each of our own countries.

Ministers agreed to do more to co-ordinate our efforts at European level, and continue to work closely with the WHO, recognising that no country can solve these problems on its own. Commissioner Kyprianou also outlined plans for a preparedness exercise "Common Ground" next month which will be a simulation exercise focusing on communication between key players in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.

On values and common principles in health care systems, Ministers discussed that although there is much diversity, there is much that unites the systems in terms of their underpinning values and common principles. Ministers agreed that there was a need to address the challenges that health systems face in terms of ageing society and rising costs, while maintaining these common values and principles. Ministers expressed interest in developing a statement on values and common principles. It also represented an excellent example of the EU delivering social justice in a globalised world, a theme that the Heads of Government would discuss at their informal meeting at the end of October.

On EU patient mobility, Ministers noted the co-operation that has existed for decades between our health systems, ensuring that workers, tourists and people who have retired to other member states can get access to care should they fall ill. However, there was also a need to clarify the rights and entitlements that patients should expect when they seek treatment in another EU member state. The choice that patients have was an important right but it must be managed in a structured way, taking account of the differences between national healthcare systems, so that both patients and member states are clear about entitlement.

Ministers considered that work in these areas could be looked at by the public health working group at a senior level, with the idea of a report back to Council at a future Health Council.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Care Homes

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): We welcomed this Office of Fair Trading report, which was published on 18 May 2005. The report, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses, made wide-ranging recommendations for both regulatory and non-regulatory solutions to problems identified with the care homes market. These have been broadly accepted by Government, devolved Administrations and regulators. The Government's action plan, which relates to England, has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Responsibility for care services is devolved in other areas of the UK.

In preparing this response, we have consulted widely across Government, local authorities, devolved administrations and regulators.

TRANSPORT

Kickstart 2005 Awards

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Karen Buck): I am pleased to announce today the results of the Department for Transport's Kickstart Bus Challenge Competition. The Department is providing £20 million to local transport authorities for 43 schemes, spread throughout England. The schemes which were successful in the competition will pump-prime new and improved bus services in the areas concerned. A full list of the schemes awarded funding is being placed in the Library of both Houses and will also be placed on the Department's website.

Rail Safety

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): I have agreed with the recommendations put forward by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Transport Safety (PACTS), the Office of Rail Regulation and the industry to change the publication of the Health and Safety Executive's reports on signals passed at danger (SPADS) from a monthly basis to a quarterly one.

I have agreed to make this change because quarterly SPAD figures provide a more statistically valid period for the trend analysis.

On 31 October HSE published the monthly SPAD report for September 2005. The next report will be on 31 January 2006 covering the period 1 October 2005 to 31 December 2005.

Up-to-date information on SPADs on a monthly basis will continue to be available in the detailed reports published each month on their website by the Rail Safety and Standards Board.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 2 November 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Strategy for Transformational Government Enabled by Technology

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. John Hutton): I have today laid before Parliament the "Strategy for Transformational Government Enabled by Technology" (Cm 6683).

The strategy describes the opportunity provided by technology to transform the business of Government and how that opportunity might be seized. The strategy was commissioned by the Prime Minister to provide overall technology leadership for Government in three areas. First, the transformation of public services for the benefit of citizens, businesses, taxpayers and frontline staff. Secondly, the efficiency of the corporate services and infrastructure of Government organisations, thus freeing resources for the front-line. Thirdly, the steps necessary to achieve more professional and effective delivery of technology-enabled business change within Government.

The strategy focuses upon the core themes that each public sector organisation needs to develop into actions for its area of responsibility, and on the supporting actions to be taken across Government as a whole.

Copies of the strategy have been placed in the Library. A full set of supporting material is available via the Cabinet Office website at: www.cio.gov.uk. The Government have invited comments on the strategy by 3 February 2006.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Increasing the Diversity of the Judiciary

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. and noble Friend, the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, has made the following written statement in the other place today:

"Following my written statement of 13 July this year, I am now announcing further progress on my programme of work to increase the diversity of the judiciary, and my plans for the coming months.

Achieving a more diverse judiciary is one of my key priorities. Public confidence in the justice system requires that our judges continue to be of the highest quality, appointed solely on merit following a rigorous selection process. To be confident we continue to appoint the best, we need to draw on the widest possible pool of those with the right skills and qualities. This means reaching out to a wider range of potential candidates. A judiciary which comprises a range of experiences and perspectives will continue to be in touch with the communities it serves.

Since July, my Department has made substantial progress in our work to encourage a wider range of people to apply for judicial appointment by improving the information offered to potential candidates. In particular:

The launch today of a new booklet, "Step up to a Judicial Career" and an accompanying DVD;

A new leaflet about judicial appointments aimed at encouraging students to consider judicial appointment as part of a legal career;

Continuation of our programme of information events, with invaluable help from growing numbers of judicial "role models";

Growing numbers of participants in our Work Shadowing Scheme, with extremely positive feedback;

Piloting a scheme to encourage members of under-represented groups to apply for specific appointments;

Increased uptake of our e-newsletter—there are now well over a thousand regular recipients;

The launch today of a new judicial diversity page on the Department's website, and improved accessibility to the site's information about judicial appointments;

Commissioning research on barriers to appointment perceived by women and black and minority ethnic lawyers—I expect to publish full results early in 2006.

There is still much to do. There is an untapped pool of potential judicial talent, particularly among solicitors, and my Department, in partnership with the Law Society, is looking at how that might be harnessed. There is little point, however, in encouraging people to apply for appointment if judicial life itself is difficult to fit in with domestic commitments. I have already taken action to address this issue: many salaried judges are now able to work part-time, and I recently approved the appointment of the first-ever job-share arrangement for a salaried post. I expect much of our work in the coming months to focus on making the judicial role better suited to a more diverse judiciary.

I am therefore introducing a career break scheme for the judiciary, to assist judges in accommodating personal responsibilities, commitments or outside interests. Further details, including the commencement date, will be announced shortly, but I expect the scheme to be up and running early in the new year.

I believe that permitting judges to return to legal practice after they cease to hold judicial office would have a significant impact on diversity by encouraging a more diverse range of people to consider applying for judicial appointment. Changing current policy to permit return to practice would encourage lawyers to consider judicial office earlier in their careers. I am minded to go ahead with this change for judges below High Court level, but before making a final decision I will ask the Judges' Council for their views on the matter. I shall also need to consider what conditions and safeguards should apply where judges do return to practice, and whether it would also be appropriate to permit those who have served at the level of High Court Judge and above to return to practice. I expect to consult stakeholders on these issues in the near future.

My Department is also taking forward work to reduce or remove altogether barriers faced by disabled judges and potential candidates. Finally, because I believe it is important for judges to be able to progress over time to more senior judicial posts, I am launching a pilot scheme in the North East whereby Circuit Judges will act as mentors to District Judges who wish to consider applying for a more senior post. Mentors will be identified and trained over the coming months.

This package of improvements will complement the steps already taken in recent months to increase the diversity of the judiciary, and will provide the new Judicial Appointments Commission with a solid base on which to build when it starts work next April."

DEFENCE

Appointment of a New Member of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): I am pleased to announce that I have appointed Lord Young of Norwood Green for a three-year term of office as a member of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body commencing March 2006. This appointment has been conducted in accordance with the guidance of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Gateways to the Professions Report

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): As stated in my written statement to Parliament on 20 July, I am able to inform the House that the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has today published Sir Alan Langlands' report examining the gateways to the professions, along with the Government's response.

Sir Alan Langlands was appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills last year, following the debate on the Higher Education Bill, to act as an independent person to oversee the report. The announcement about his appointment and the terms of reference was made in a statement to the House on 12 February 2004. Sir Alan was asked to examine how the public sector and the professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for the full £3,000 support that will be available in grants and bursaries under our plans to introduce variable fees from 2006. He was asked to put forward recommendations on actions that can be taken by employing organisations to provide clear and accessible gateways for all graduates who want to pursue such careers and which will benefit the recruitment needs of these sectors.

In welcoming Sir Alan's report and its recommendations, I would stress that there has never been a better time for students from poorer backgrounds to enter higher education. We expect that 55 per cent. of all new full time students will qualify for a full or partial grant, and further help will be available by way of bursaries from higher education institutions. This means that the poorest students will have a minimum of £3,000 in non repayable support.

In accepting Sir Alan's recommendations we are also supporting the strong sense of partnership which he wishes to encourage. We will therefore create a development fund to carry work forward across the recommendations. Up to £6 million will be made available over the next three years to support collaborative projects in the key areas suggested by Sir Alan.

We have also committed to the establishment of a forum for sharing and developing recruitment and retention strategies. The forum will be key in helping to take forward Sir Alan's recommendations and in addressing the issues raised in his report.

Copies of the report and the Government's response are available in the Library of both Houses.

HEALTH

Health Service Bodies Accounts 2004–05

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Liam Byrne): Lord Warner, the Minister of State, Department of Health has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

"For the health service bodies listed as follows, their annual accounts and any accompanying comptroller and auditor general reports have today been laid before Parliament pursuant to section 98(1C) of the National Health Service Act 1977. Copies have been placed in the Library.

National Treatment Agency

NHS Pensions Agency

NHS Professionals"

NORTHERN IRELAND

Community-based Restorative Justice

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): The Government have been seeking to develop guidelines to give effect to the recommendation in the Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland relating to community-based restorative justice (rec. 168). The Review recommended that community-based restorative justice schemes could have a role to play in dealing with the types of low-level crime that most commonly concern local communities, subject to a number of conditions and safeguards. These were that such schemes should:

(i) receive referrals from a statutory criminal justice agency, rather than from within the community, with the police being informed of all such referrals;

(ii) be accredited by, and subject to standards laid down by the Government in respect of how they deal with criminal activity, covering such issues as training of staff, human rights protections, other due process and proportionality issues, and complaints mechanisms for both victims and offenders;

(iii) be subject to regular inspection by the independent Criminal Justice Inspectorate; and

(iv) have no role in determining the guilt or innocence of alleged offenders, and deal only with those individuals referred by a criminal justice agency who have indicated that they do not wish to deny guilt and where there is prima facie evidence of guilt.

In line with the Review, there is no question of the Government approving a two-tier system. The guidelines will unambiguously specify the involvement of the police and other statutory criminal justice organisations in the operation of the community-based schemes. That is why the work on the guidelines is being taken forward by a group including representatives of the PSNI, the Public Prosecution Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency as well as officials from my Department. The group has been in contact with the community-based schemes about the guidelines and aims to complete the current round of discussions with them by around 30 November 2005. Following that, in December I plan to circulate the guidelines to the main political parties in Northern Ireland as well as to the Policing Board and other key stakeholders for comment. I would expect this process to be completed in the new year, when decisions will be taken on the way forward.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Low-carbon Buildings

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): The low-carbon buildings capital grant programme (LCBP) will be allocated £30 million, to be spent over three years. It will replace the Clear Skies and Major PV Demonstration programmes.

I aim to launch the LCBP by April 2006. Some £1.5 million of the funding package will be brought forward to allow further funding for the two existing programmes, in order to help transition to the new programme.

The LCBP will be designed to take a holistic approach to reducing carbon emissions by using innovative combinations of microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures.

As well as continuing to fund single installations the programme will focus on supporting large scale developments in the public and private sectors to act as exemplars and encourage further projects. Potential community beneficiaries could include schools, leisure centres or even remote villages that are not connected to the grid. Other projects could include housing estates or business parks. The focus on larger developments is designed to engage the construction sector more widely and to help push microgeneration products further down the road towards commercial viability.

This grant programme is just one part of the Government's strategy to promote microgeneration, which will aim to remove those barriers currently hindering the development of a sustainable market for these products.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Women and Pensions

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. David Blunkett): I have today published "Women and Pensions: The Evidence", a compendium of statistics and analysis examining in detail the key influences on the level of women's retirement income. The report has been placed in the Library and copies are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office.

The report clearly shows that inequalities of income in retirement can not be tackled in isolation from inequality during working life. The Government are committed to a holistic approach that develops social and labour market policies hand-in-hand. In this way we can tackle the gap in pay, income and assets and break the glass-ceiling for progression through working-life, as well as address the historically deep divide in retirement income which has been a product of a system predicated on a 1940s world where women were seen as dependent on their husbands.

Since 1997 we have made significant progress in redeeming past inequality of income. Two-thirds of the 1.3 million workers benefiting from the National Minimum Wage are women and the UK now has the highest female employment rate of the major EU countries, with the gender pay gap at its lowest point for 30 years. Two-thirds of pension credit recipients are women and the UK pension system is today delivering better average retirement incomes than any previous generation has ever enjoyed—with 1.9 million lifted out of absolute poverty since 1997, of whom 1.3 million are women.

However, as today's report makes clear, in 2005, only 30 per cent. of women reach state pension age entitled to a full basic state pension compared with 85 per cent. of men. Only 24 per cent. of women reaching state pension age are entitled to a full basic state pension on the basis of their own contributions, and only 17 per cent. are actually in receipt of a full basic state pension based on these contributions.

New figures from the Government Actuary's Department contained in this report show that by 2025 women are projected to have caught up with men and both should be reaching age 65 with similar basic state pensions. This is good news but is far from the full picture. Only 38 per cent. of today's working age women are contributing to a private pension and at present, retired men receive on average £50 to £100 a week more than women of the same age.

Saving for retirement is also affected by household activities and attitudes. Child care continues to be predominantly done by women. Elder care is more evenly split but the difference is still significant—27 per cent. of women and 19 per cent. of men aged 45–64 care for another adult. Time spent out of the labour market has an effect on the ability of women to build up a retirement income. This is particularly important given that many women perceive pensions to be associated with paid employment, and therefore not applicable to them.

Furthermore, within every ethnic group, women are less likely than men to have private pension provision and there are currently no foreseeable national changes to the pattern of labour market participation for ethnic minority women to suggest a significant change to their pension accrual rates.

The comprehensive evidence in this report will inform our ongoing National Pensions Debate and in particular support the specific Women and Pensions Conference we are hosting in Manchester on Monday 7 November. It will feed into the final stages of Pension Commission's work on its own report and it will underpin our subsequent response that will shape the future of retirement provision in the UK.

I would like to thank hon. Members and noble Lords who have campaigned and developed the case for lasting change—and who have worked with us to develop a renewed focus on this crucial issue of equality. I hope that all Members will join with me in building on this evidence to put fairer outcomes for women at the heart of our consensus for a long-term solution to the pensions challenge.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 3 November 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Compensation Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, has made the following written statement in the other place today:

"The Compensation Bill has been published today.

The Bill will provide better safeguards for consumers of claims management services and will reassure those concerned about possible litigation that the law of negligence takes the social value of activities into account and that they will not be found liable if they adopt reasonable standards and procedures.

The Bill sets out the proposed legislative framework for the regulation of claims management services to provide effective protection for consumers and to tackle the bad practices that have been a common feature of the claims management sector. Regulation will be applied initially to areas where consumers are most at risk—personal injury, criminal injuries compensation, employment, housing disrepair and claims for redress in relation to the mis-selling of financial products such as endowment policies.

The Bill will provide for regulation that is effective, proportionate to the risk involved, and creates the minimum burden necessary. The Bill will deliver a level playing field of consumer protection so that whomever a consumer seeks advice and assistance from they can expect a quality service and proper mechanism for redress if a problem arises.

The Bill will make it an offence for claims management services to be provided by persons who are not authorised under the new regulatory regime or who are not already fully regulated by another regulator such as the Law Society or the Financial Services Authority.

The Bill will provide for the Secretary of State to appoint or establish a body to regulate the claims management sector. Regulatory responsibility will only be given to a body that is competent, has appropriate governance and other management arrangements in place and will provide benefits to consumers. If no suitable body can be appointed or established, the Secretary of State will regulate directly.

The Bill's provision on negligence reflects recent judgments of the higher courts. It makes clear that when considering a claim in negligence, in deciding what is required to meet the standard of care in particular circumstances, a court is able to consider the wider social value of the activity in the context of which the injury or damage occurred. It provides that the court can have regard to whether requiring particular steps to be taken to meet the standard of care might prevent a desirable activity from being undertaken or might discourage people involved in providing the activity from doing so.

The Bill forms part of a wider programme of work which is being taken forward across Government, and in partnership with stakeholders, to tackle perceptions that can lead to a disproportionate fear of litigation and risk averse behaviour; to find ways to discourage and resist bad claims; and to improve the system for those with a valid claim for compensation."

DEFENCE

Regional Prime Contract (Central)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): I am pleased to announce that CarillionEnterprise, sponsored by Carillion Services Ltd. and Enterprise plc, has been awarded the Regional Prime Contract covering the Ministry of Defence's estate in the West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, North East of England, North West of England and the whole of Wales. This follows the successful conclusion of discussions with CarillionEnterprise which was appointed as preferred bidder in May 2005.

The seven-year contract, worth in the region of £550 million, is the fourth in a series of five such regional arrangements to cover the estate and provide for capital works, property maintenance and facilities management services, throughout the Central region of England.

The MOD has undertaken to make significant improvements in the overall condition of its estate by changing its organisational structures and introducing Prime Contracting methods. Encouraging innovation and efficiency, Regional Prime Contracting is a key initiative that aims to provide a better quality of service and greater value for money through suitably incentivised contracts conforming to the principles of "Smart Acquisition". The remaining Regional Prime Contract covering the East region is expected to be awarded later this year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will be held on 7 November in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I will represent the UK.

The agenda items are as follows:

Report on Informal Heads of State/Government meeting (Hampton Court, 27 October 2005)

The Presidency will report back to Member States on the outcome of the meeting and indicate any areas of action to be taken forward.

Financial Perspectives

This will be the first full ministerial discussion of future financing during the UK Presidency. We expect it will focus on the outstanding areas where further progress is needed, with the aim of providing a useful basis for working towards a deal at the European Council on 15–16 December.

WTO/DDA

The Commission will update the Council on the latest state of play in the WTO negotiations.

Avian Flu

The Presidency will update Partners on latest developments and invite the Commission to do the same.

Kosovo

The Council will discuss how best the EU can support a final status process for Kosovo and what contribution on the ground it might be able to make to a Kosovo settlement. Council Conclusions are expected.

Iran

The Council will focus on how the EU should take forward its relationship with Iran taking into account developments in the EU's areas of concern (including Iran's nuclear programme, human rights record, approach towards terrorism, and opposition to the Middle East Peace Process). The Council will also discuss the remarks made by President Mahmud Ahmadinejad calling for "Israel to be wiped from the map." Council Conclusions are expected.

Syria

Following the publication of the 20 October report by Detlev Mehlis on the assassination of former Lebanese President Rafic Hariri and the approval of UN Security Council Resolution 1636, the Council will focus on the EU's relationship with Syria. Council Conclusions are expected.

MEPP

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner is expected to present the Commission's Communication on EU support for the Palestinian Authority. The Council is also expected to announce the launch of an ESDP Police Mission in the Occupied Territories (EU COPPS) to build on the work led by the UK to support the development of Palestinian civil policing capacity. Council Conclusions are expected.

Iraq

The Council is expected to welcome the recent approval of the new Iraqi Constitution. Council Conclusions are expected.

Belarus

The Council will focus on the deteriorating situation of human rights and political freedoms in Belarus and the need to address these concerns, particularly in the light of Presidential elections in 2006. Council Conclusions are expected.

UN World Summit follow-up

The Council will briefly discuss the EU's commitment to playing an active role in ensuring that the reforms agreed at September's UN World Summit are fully and urgently implemented. Council Conclusions are expected.

HEALTH

NICE (Appraisal)

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): Today I am announcing that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is launching a new, rapid process for assessing drugs and other treatments. The single technology appraisal process will be used initially to produce faster guidance on life-saving drugs which have already been licensed and on new medicines close to when they first become available. This new process is in addition to NICE's standard process.

NICE is starting work immediately on five topics as a first tranche. NICE will also be consulting widely on the new process over the next three months. The Institute will consult with organisations representing patients, healthcare professionals and the healthcare industries on the details of the new process. Comments arising from the consultation will be taken into account alongside the lessons learned from developing guidance on its first tranche.

The new faster process will benefit many thousands of patients, especially those with life threatening conditions. It will provide greater certainty about the provision of important new treatments, as well as enabling the National Health Service to plan better for the introduction of new drugs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Youth Justice Board

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): The Youth Justice Board's Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–05 has been laid before Parliament today. Copies have been placed in the House Library.

Investigatory Powers Tribunal

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am pleased to announce that Her Majesty the Queen has reappointed members to the Tribunal (including a President and Vice President) by Letters Patent for a period of five years, as provided for by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The reappointed Tribunal members are:

Lord Justice John Mummery—President

Sir Michael Burton—Vice President

Mr William Carmichael

Sir Richard Gaskell

Sheriff Principal John McInnes QC

Mr Peter Scott QC

Mr Robert Seabrook QC

The Tribunal considers proceedings brought under section 7 of the Human Rights Act 1998 against the intelligence agencies and in respect of the investigatory powers covered by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, by all public authorities. It also considers all complaints against the intelligence agencies and all complaints against public authorities in respect of the powers in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The Tribunal, which is independent of Government, has full powers to investigate and decide any case within its jurisdiction.

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I am announcing today statistics relating to anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs).

An ASBO is a civil order that protects the community from behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.

ASBOs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999. They can be issued to anyone aged 10 years or over. They impose restrictions on the behaviour of individuals who have behaved in an anti-social way and protect communities from often longstanding and highly intimidating activity.

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and can lead to custody. The maximum penalty for breach of an ASBO is five years imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000 for an adult offender. Data on the number of ASBOs issued are updated quarterly.

New figures for the period up to March 2005 are now available. These figures show that for the period between April 1999 and March 2005 the number of ASBOs issued (as reported to the Home Office) was 5,557. The number of ASBOs issued in the quarter January to March 2005 is 897 and represents 16 per cent. of the total number of ASBOs issued over all quarters. Of those ASBOs issued, 53 per cent. were to adults and 44 per cent to juveniles (3 per cent. of ASBOs are age unknown). Some 50 per cent. were orders on application and 50 per cent. were orders on conviction.

The Home Office is notified by courts of ASBOs issued. However, evidence is emerging of some under-reporting of the number of ASBOs issued. The courts are requested to provide the Home Office with statistical information concerning all ASBOs. This has not happened in all cases, and the Home Office is currently working with Her Majesty's Courts Service to address this under-reporting.

A new single standard IT system (LIBRA) is planned to be implemented in all magistrates' courts during 2006 onwards and this will improve the quality and timeliness of data. Where data are not currently reported by the courts on time, data for previous quarters are reconciled to take account of any late court returns.

I have placed in the House Library a briefing note containing information about ASBOs and the ASBO statistics issued today.

PRIME MINISTER

Chief Surveillance Commissioner

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today laid before both Houses the annual report for 2004–2005 of the Chief Surveillance Commissioner, the right hon. Sir Andrew Leggatt.

I am grateful to the Commissioner, and his office, for this report and the work that has gone into preparing it.

Interception of Communications Commissioner and the Intelligence Services Commissioner

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today laid before both Houses the annual reports for 2004 of the Interception of Communications Commissioner, the right hon. Sir Swinton Thomas, and the Intelligence Services Commissioner, the right hon. Lord Brown of Eaton-Under-Heywood. Some sensitive information has been excluded from the reports of the Interception of Communications Commissioner and the Intelligence Services Commissioner in accordance with Section 58(7) and 60(5) of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

I am grateful to the Commissioners for their reports and the work that has gone into preparing them.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Company Law Reform

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): The Government are very grateful for the continuing involvement of the whole range of interested parties in the development of the Company Law Reform Bill. Development of the Bill has proceeded on as consultative a basis as possible throughout, and has relied crucially on the close involvement of a wide range of businesses, business organisations, and other individuals and bodies.

Publication of the White Paper "Company Law Reform" in March this year was a key stage. The White Paper set out the Government's policy proposals in almost all areas of the Bill, and included draft clauses in many of these areas. Many further clauses were subsequently published on the website, along with further explanatory material, including a Government statement published on 19 July 2005.

Consultation has revealed continued broad support for the underlying thrust of the Bill, and for the great majority of the specific policies within it. Many comments of detail were received on the draft clauses. The Bill as introduced takes account of these comments and benefits very significantly from the suggestions made.

The full range of the Government's proposals is now set out in the Company Law Reform Bill, introduced to Parliament on 1 November. This statement sets out the main areas where, in the light of the consultation process or of other recent developments, the Government have made more substantial policy decisions in key areas since July.

Directors' duties

There were many detailed and helpful responses on the proposed statutory statement of directors' duties. In the light of those responses, the Government have decided:

that it is still fully committed to an approach based on "enlightened shareholder value", but wants to ensure that this adequately reflects wider expectations of responsible business behaviour. The duty to promote the success of the company will therefore place greater emphasis on the long-term consequences of business decisions, and on the need for directors to take account of factors such as the interests of employees and the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment so far as reasonably practicable.

to make it clearer that the statutory statement is (with two exceptions in respect of the duties on conflicts of interest) a codification of the current law and does not change the current position on authorisation.

to make it clearer that most of the duties continue to be fiduciary. This is important in respect of the remedies for breach of the duties.

to make clear that the clauses on directors' liabilities change the law on ratification so that the necessary majority to ratify a wrong has to be reached without the support of the wrongdoers.

True and fair accounts

It is a very clear common sense principle that the auditor's role is to ensure that accounts give a true and fair view of the company's financial position. Whilst some of the terminology differs, this is the aim both of our own UK company law traditions and modern International Accounting Standards.

The current law reflects this basic principle. However, the statutory framework is complicated and has become more so over time, combining both UK and Community law provisions. The Government is therefore taking the opportunity in the Bill to restate s.235 of the Companies Act to express the principle more clearly in the legislation.

To underline the point, the Bill also includes a new clause providing an express duty on Directors to ensure accounts give a true and fair view. We are requiring that auditors take this new duty of the directors into account when they conduct their audits, to underline the point that directors and auditors should approach the accounts with the same common sense objective of ensuring that accounts give a true and fair view of the company's financial position.

Resolutions and meetings

Minimum notice period for AGMs

The Government had originally proposed reducing the statutory minimum notice period to 14 days, as a simplificatory measure. But several stakeholders have commented that the original CLR recommendation may have been overtaken by EU developments. The proposed EU Shareholder Rights Directive is currently consulting on introducing a minimum notice period of 21 "business" days for quoted companies AGMs.

Some stakeholders have also argued that such a change could conflict with the increasingly important "shareholder engagement" agenda. In the light of these concerns, the Government have decided to retain the current law (21 days for AGMs and 14 days for other general meetings), at least pending further clarity at EU level.

15 day holding period

This White Paper proposal was intended to foster shareholder engagement, by giving shareholders a 15 day "window" where they can act upon the information disclosed in the company's annual accounts and report and lay resolutions for the general meeting. But stakeholders raised significant concerns that it might cause practical difficulties and thus impose additional costs in implementation, particularly in conjunction with our other proposal to shorten the timeline between the financial year-end and holding the AGM to six months.

The Government are still keen to foster the underlying policy of shareholder engagement. The Bill will therefore ensure that shareholder resolutions requisitioned before the end of the financial year-end should still be circulated at the company's expense.

Institutional Investor Voting

The White Paper said that the Government were continuing to explore the proposal that institutional investors should disclose how their voting rights had been exercised, as had been recommended by the Company Law Review. The Government published draft clauses on this on 14 October 2005. The proposal has attracted considerable stakeholder comment with views polarised. Some consultees argue that such a mandatory disclosure regime will be costly for industry and that the benefits are unclear. Others strongly support the measure. The Government believe it is important that institutional investors take an active part in the governance of companies in which they invest and disclosing how they have voted is a helpful measure in this context. The Government would prefer disclosure to become the norm without statutory action but recognises that a voluntary approach may fail to deliver this outcome. Our approach is therefore to encourage disclosure without compulsion in the first instance but we consider that a power should be contained in the Bill against the possibility that sufficient disclosure does not take place on a voluntary basis. If it becomes necessary to exercise the power, the Government will consult fully with interested parties on any mandatory regime which might be considered, paying regard in particular to possible costs and benefits.

Offences

The White Paper consulted on changes to the framework of liability attaching to breaches of Companies Act requirements. These proposals attracted a good deal of comment. In particular, consultees were concerned about an apparent extension of liability beyond those officers of the company who are currently held to be liable for breaches. These comments focused on two specific White Paper proposals, namely that the definition of "officers in default" should be redefined and to some extent extended more widely within the company by the use of a new definition of "senior executive"; and the proposed inclusion of a category of persons, "responsible delegates", who would be newly liable in certain circumstances.

Concerns focused both on the desirability of the underlying policy, which many felt risked diluting the essential focus on the responsibilities of the directors themselves; and on the technical difficulties of defining these new categories of persons in ways which met the overall objective of increasing clarity. The Government share these concerns, and therefore does not now propose to take forward these specific measures.

The White Paper proposed to increase the maximum penalty for the offence of directors approving defective accounts to seven years imprisonment; and the July consultation proposed the same maximum penalty for the new offence for auditors who knowingly or recklessly issue an incorrect audit report. Stakeholders felt that these proposed penalties were excessive, and the Government have decided to remove the threat of imprisonment for both offences, for which the maximum penalty will therefore be an unlimited fine. Serious offences can still be pursued eg through a prosecution for theft or false accounting, each of which carries a penalty of up to seven years in prison.

Charges

On 19 July the Government launched a consultation seeking views on the economic impact of the recommendations of the Law Commission and the Scottish Law Commission in respect of company charges. The timing of this consultation ensured that it would be possible to include a sufficiently wide power in

the forthcoming Company Law Reform Bill to enable them to be enacted if there was firm support expressed for the Law Commission's proposals.

It was clear from the consultation that there is not a consensus of support for the proposals. The Bill will therefore not include a specific power to implement charges measures but the Bill will include a new power to make company law reform orders (as discussed in the White Paper), and this will provide a mechanism for implementing certain changes in respect of company charges, on matters of company law (as against property law) if wished. The Government will continue to consider and to discuss with interested parties exactly what changes should be implemented.

Paper free holding and transfer of shares

The White Paper said that the Government will be willing in principle to include provisions in the Bill which would permit companies to stop issuing paper share certificates. Many respondents argued that only a mandatory approach would achieve cost savings and wider business benefits, but they also agreed that it is too early to take a blanket approach and that more information is needed on the costs and benefits of a paper free approach. The Government believe it would be premature to take a decision on the case for a mandatory approach until there has been wider public consultation, but it does not wish to rule out the option for reform. The Bill will therefore extend the existing power relating to transfer of securities (section 207, Companies Act 1989) so that it can be used either to permit or to require the paper free holding and transfer of shares.

UK-wide law: Northern Ireland

On 7 September the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith) launched a consultation on the proposal that the new companies legislation should extend automatically to companies in Northern Ireland (as well as, as now, Great Britain). This proposal reflected the fact that legislation in Northern Ireland, though technically a separate matter, generally follows very closely the precedent of legislation in Great Britain, but with a distance in time which means that Northern Ireland companies do not generally get the advantages of new legislation until some time after their English, Welsh and Scottish counterparts.

Consultation revealed substantial support for this proposal, and for the suggestion that certain other aspects of law which relate closely to company law (for example, limited partnerships and limited liability partnerships) should be legislated for on a UK-wide basis. The Bill reflects this position.

Company law will remain a transferred matter, and a future Northern Ireland Assembly could decide to resume responsibility for drafting separate Northern Ireland companies legislation if it considered it desirable.

Insolvency law

In the light of a recent decision of the House of Lords (Buchler and another v Talbot and others, re Leyland Daf [2004] UKHL 9) there may be an anomaly between liquidation and administration as regards the recovery of insolvency practitioners' expenses, raising concerns about whether or not companies will be advised to follow the most appropriate form of insolvency procedure. The decision is to the effect that for companies in liquidation the payment of the general expenses of the winding up cannot be paid out of assets which are subject to a floating charge ahead of the floating charge holder.

There may also be implications for both the general body of creditors and employees because floating charge holders may be attracted by the better returns that the more terminal liquidation procedure offers, as opposed to administration, which is more aimed at fostering company "rescue." For these reasons, the Government will change the law to ensure that for companies in liquidation general expenses of the wind-up can be paid out of assets subject to a floating charge ahead of the floating charge holder.

Enterprise Act

Part 9 of the Enterprise Act 2002 creates a gateway for the disclosure of information relating to specific consumer and competition matters. In addition, it creates a gateway to allow certain information to be disclosed for certain civil investigations and proceedings overseas. The current Part 9 gateways do not in general allow information to be released by public bodies to business and individuals for the purpose of civil proceedings.

The Government launched a consultation on this area on 23 August 2005. This consultation does not close until 18 November 2005 and the Government look forward to responses. No decisions will be taken until the Government have had the opportunity to consider all such responses. However, without prejudice to the outcome of that consultation, in the event that the Government were to decide that some relaxation of the gateways was appropriate, it would be necessary to provide some legislative route to implement the specific measure. The Bill will therefore include a power for the Secretary of State to prescribe through secondary legislation circumstances in which such disclosures might be made.

TRANSPORT

Railways Security Equipment Trial

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Alistair Darling): Yesterday I informed the Transport Select Committee that I have given the go ahead for new security techniques to be trialled on mainland rail and underground stations.

The trial will begin in the New Year. It will test how effective new and existing technology could be to help counter the continued terrorist threat to the UK transport network.

The trial will form part of our ongoing consideration of transport security. It comes after the review of rail security following the Madrid rail attacks in March 2004.

I informed the House of that review on the 10 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 130WS. It examined security measures in place and potential improvements to current systems on the UK's underground and rail networks. The review identified a package of

recommendations to enhance rail counter terrorist security. Some of these measures will be obvious to the public, others are not.

The attacks of 7 July and the continued threat from international terrorism make this work more urgent. The equipment trial I am announcing today is a further stage in this work.

Transport security measures have to be proportionate and responsive. Around 3 million people travel on the London Underground network and well over 2 million people travel on the country's rail network every day. It is important that we reduce the risk to those passengers whilst recognising that accessibility is important to people and business.

It is equally important that we do not ignore the benefits that new technology could provide us. Potential security benefits should not be disregarded without due consideration. We have to be ready to look at whether further action is appropriate and practical.

The equipment trial I am announcing today is an important part of our considerations. It will use some currently available screening techniques on the national rail and London Underground network for the first time. It will help establish whether there are benefits in the introduction of a system of fractional screening. This is the screening of a small proportion of passengers on either a random or targeted basis using new technology or other systems available to us.

The equipment trial will begin in the New Year for four weeks on the Heathrow Express platforms at Paddington station. Further locations for a small number of trials will be identified by my Department in consultation with London Underground, Network Rail and others over the next six months.

The trial will be a series of tests of screening equipment. At selected locations a small number of randomly chosen passengers will be asked to take part in the tests. This may involve either going through a scanner or being searched either by hand, with the use of portable trace equipment or with sniffer dogs. Bags may be passed through x-ray machines.

Most techniques will be familiar to the public, especially to those who fly. However some technology will be new. This includes the first use on the UK railway of body scanners using millimetre wave technology. This enables the operator to check for objects concealed in or under clothing.

In itself the trial is not designed to be part of the current security regime. It will test the usefulness of the specialist equipment and help examine the practical issues that may affect its future use in a normal rail environment.

It is not suggested that it will be possible to turn our rail or underground network into a closed system like an airport. Widespread screening, even on a fractional basis, as to be tested now, would be a huge step and not one to be taken lightly. No decision on its the future use has been taken. This equipment test is essential to ensure that when it is, the decision is based on reliable evidence and experience.

The trial will be followed by a period of evaluation. I will of course keep the House informed.

Leeds Supertram

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): In July 2004, I took the decision to withdraw funding for the Leeds Supertram because of excessive cost increases. Since then we have been in discussion with the scheme promoters, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (WYPTE), about their alternative proposals.

I have considered very carefully all the new information provided by the promoters. The latest tram proposals are still very expensive—costs are nearly 40 per cent. higher than originally planned. This proposal is also for a reduced scheme which places more of the risks with the public sector. It does not represent the best value for money for the people of Leeds or the best use of public money—particularly when compared to alternative proposals put forward by WYPTE for a top of the range rapid bus scheme. I therefore cannot support requests to re-instate the tram proposal.

Leeds Supertram was given approval in 2001 with a cap on the public sector funding of £355 million in 2001 present value terms. By July 2004, costs had escalated considerably to over £500 million.

Since funding was withdrawn, the promoters have made great efforts to reduce the scheme costs. Their submission of November 2004 suggested that the funding requirement for a revised proposal was £392 million, in present value terms. This was for a reduced scheme (the current proposal truncates the southern line) and with some risks taken back into the public sector.

The promoters say their latest proposal requires public sector funding of £348 million in 2001 present value terms. However, this simple comparison is seriously misleading because:

> These figures are the total value in 2001 of the required public funding, at the prices ruling in 2001. In 2005, at current prices, the value would be £486 million—nearly 40 per cent. above the 2001 cap. And this is still a present value figure, so it understates the cost increase in cash terms over the life of the scheme.
>
> But it is the cash costs that count. The current proposal requires £261.6 million of grant and a total of £1,142 million in RSG payments, associated with the PFI credits, up to 2040. The original proposal required grant of £294.5 million, and only £467 million in annual payments to 2032. Allowing for local contributions, the cost to Government has almost doubled, from £664 million to £1.3 billion, over 40 years.

At a meeting with local Council Leaders on 26 July 2005, the Under-Secretary of State asked for additional information on tram costs and for further work to be done on a top of the range bus option. The aim was to consider whether buses could deliver a better solution than light rail when all possible existing levers were used in an imaginative and cost effective way.

We commissioned Atkins to carry out the study, working closely with WYPTE and its advisers. I am grateful to WYPTE for all the work they have done with the Department on this study.

Atkins based their work on that previously done by WYPTE to look at a bus rapid transit (BRT) system as an alternative to Leeds Supertram. This work was submitted to us in November 2004. Atkins concluded that the work undertaken by WYPTE was "very thorough, and a good basis for considering a high quality bus alternative in the current study".

A BRT system is a new approach to meeting public transport needs. It would involve superior quality vehicles with many features similar to trams, including high quality vehicle interior, air conditioning, double glazing etc. It would be accompanied by fixed physical infrastructure in terms of dedicated stops, high quality shelters, real time information, off-board ticket machines etc. And it would be developed to operate as a complete system, with destinctive branding, priority at junctions, lengths of segregated track etc.

Atkins concluded that:

> "The BRT option has the potential to offer a lower cost and better value for money alternative to the Supertram proposal. Atkins considers that a BRTsystem would offer many of the attributes of the Supertram system, including:
>
> similar stop and service patterns with a higher frequency service;
>
> similar overall journey times (including waiting time);
>
> the majority of the physical features;
>
> in the region of 90 per cent. of the forecast patronage for Supertram; and
>
> most of the wider appraisal benefits attributable to Supertram
>
> and these would be delivered at around 50 per cent. of the capital cost of the tram."

Atkins recognises that BRT has most of the advantages of the tram scheme, but not all, and there remains an element of risk in their conclusions given that a comprehensive bus system has not been delivered in this manner before in the UK. They also noted that, in a deregulated bus market, there were delivery risks that would need to be addressed.

The tram proposal remains extremely expensive, and in cash terms still costs much more than the scheme we approved in 2001. I cannot, therefore, approve the Supertram proposals. On the other hand, the bus study suggests that a top of the range bus system, designed and delivered in a way similar to a tram network, has considerable potential, and would be significantly better value for taxpayers. It could benefit more people and would be more flexible with scope for further extensions.

With the right commitment from central and local government, and the local bus operators, there is an opportunity here for Leeds to develop a showcase bus stytem that could lead the way for other cities.

I would encourage West Yorkshire PTE to take this opportunity and to work with my Department to develop proposals. The funding will be there for the right proposals.

We acknowledge Atkins' comments about risks in delivering a BRT system. However none of the problems identified by Atkins is insurmountable. I very much hope that the bus companies in Leeds will work constructively with the PTE to show what a high quality bus system can deliver. There are clear benefits to the bus companies in so doing. However, should it be necessary, I am prepared to work with WYPTE to give them the powers they need to make sure we get a system that works properly as part of an overall transport policy.

We have always recognised that trams can be very effective in heavily trafficked areas. We will continue to be prepared to support trams, where they are the right solution. But we will not do so at any cost, and in many cases a well designed and promoted bus based system is likely to provide a more cost effective solution.

Where trams are promoted, they will need to be developed as part of an integrated approach to tackling an area's problems, and they will need to be supported by commitments to complementary measures to deliver the benefits of increased public transport usage and reduced congestion. We will continue to work closely with promoters and the industry to seek to ensure that these benefits can be realised, and that the costs of tram systems are minimised and properly controlled.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 24 October 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Pig Keepers

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of pig keepers who also keep *(a)* ducks and *(b)* poultry. [19142]

Jim Knight: Based on the June 2004 Survey of Agriculture the number of holdings in England recording poultry and pigs were:

	Number
(a) Pigs and ducks	1,823
(b) Pigs and poultry (including ducks)	4,091

Source:
June Agricultural Survey.

Poultry Keepers

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many poultry keepers she estimates there are in England. [19244]

Jim Knight: Based on the June 2004 Survey of Agriculture the estimated number of holdings in England recording poultry was around 34,000.

Source:
June Agricultural Survey

Ragwort Control Act

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to ensure that local authorities highways departments comply with the Ragwort Control Act 2003 Code of Practice. [18700]

Jim Knight: Copies of the code were made available to all local authorities at the time of publication in July last year. The code provides advice for large scale land managers on how to develop a strategic approach to ragwort control. Feedback that we have had from a number of local councils during this summer indicates they are taking seriously the provisions of the code and the need to control ragwort where it poses a threat to animal welfare. Where Defra receives concerns about ragwort spreading from local authority land to land used for grazing animals or the production of conserved forage, we investigate the complaint in accordance with our enforcement procedures under the Weeds Act.

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to ensure that other Government Departments are aware of the provisions of the Ragwort Control Act 2003 Code of Practice. [18702]

Jim Knight: Defra worked closely with other Government Departments, including Department for Transport, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Estates when drawing up the provisions of the Code of Practice on how to prevent the spread of ragwort. The code was published in July last year and all relevant Government Departments received a copy of the final version.

Rural Post Offices, Banks and Shops

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the effects of the closure of rural *(a)* post offices, *(b)* bank branches and *(c)* independent retail shops in the south-east. [18747]

Jim Knight: The Department receives a range of representations on issues relating to provision of services in rural areas, including post offices, bank branches and retail shops. I am aware of the importance of local services to rural communities, and my Department works with others to improve the accessibility of these services.

In relation to the south-east, in the last year we have received a letter from Councillor Mike FitzGerald (Maidstone borough council) concerning changes in provision to postal services in the Maidstone area.

Snares

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on where and why the Department will give licences for the use of snares. [20771]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Department does not routinely issue licences for the use of snares unless the species are listed under schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

As with any licence, we would assess whether the proposed action on wildlife is justified and appropriate.

On 19 October, the Department launched a Code of Practice on the Use of Snares in Fox and Rabbit Control. This code details the legal obligations for people using snares in England and Wales, and also includes information on alternatives available to land managers to minimise damage to game, wildlife, livestock and crops caused by rabbits and foxes.

A copy of the code together with the report of the Independent Working Group on snares can be found on the following web page:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/snares/index.htm

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what inquiries his Department is undertaking regarding statutory blight compensation for people affected by the proposed A21 upgrade in East Sussex. [21071]

Dr. Ladyman: Inquiries are currently being undertaken, under the statutory blight provisions, on 12 applications received from people affected by the proposed A21 Flimwell to Robertsbridge upgrade in East Sussex.

Merchant Navy

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 671W, on merchant navy, how many of the *(a)* officers and *(b)* seamen serving in the merchant marine in each year between 1994 and 2004 were British citizens. [18886]

Dr. Ladyman: All the officers and seamen are UK citizens.

Motorways

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress on the trial M42 hard shoulder running. [20476]

Dr. Ladyman: The trial of hard shoulder running will be the final phase of the M42 Active Traffic Management project and is included in the Highways Agency's Business Plan as a target to be delivered by March 2007. There will be comprehensive publicity prior to its introduction.

Northern Line

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the public-private partnership funding arrangements for the Northern Line; and if he will make a statement. [20286]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Northern Line PFI contract is the responsibility of Tube Lines, and the management of the contract is a matter for the mayor and Transport for London. The Department expects both London Underground and Tube Lines to manage effectively the PPP and PFI contracts and ensure that their contractual requirements are met.

The PPP contracts are about delivering lasting solutions to reverse the historic under-investment in the Underground. The Government has committed more than a £1 billion a year to Transport for London to provide the long-term stability and investment necessary for London Underground to deliver the service that Londoners deserve.

Rail Franchises

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to announce the award of the contract for the integrated Kent franchise. [20950]

Derek Twigg: The award of the integrated Kent franchise is due to be announced before the end of 2005.

Road Closures (Sporting Events)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which trunk roads in the east midlands were closed on 2 September 2005 as a result of a cycle race taking place; how long those closures were operative in each case; and on whose authority the closures were authorised. [20296]

Dr. Ladyman: The annual Tour of Britain cycle race held on 2 September 2005, crossed east midlands trunk roads A46/A606 Widmerpool roundabout, and A52/A606 Wheatcroft roundabout, both in Nottinghamshire. For safety reasons the slip roads to these trunk roads were briefly closed by uniformed police outriders using police powers, for two 15 minute periods each, with a 10-minute gap between each closure to allow the cyclists to cross the roads safely. The trunk roads were not actually closed.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what his policy is regarding road closures taking place for non-essential, non-transport related events; whether any assessments are made before such closures are authorised of the likely congestion to be caused; whether he plans to review his policy on such closures; and if he will make a statement; [20298]

(2) what advice he has issued to highway authorities concerning road closures for social or sporting events. [20297]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department's policy on road closures for special events is that generally this is a matter for local authorities to decide under their powers at Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

The Department published the network management duty guidance under part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 in November 2004. The annex on good practice provides guidance for local authorities on event planning processes and management practices so as to minimise disruption to the local network.

In preparation for HM the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, the Department also issued advice to the chief executives of all English local authorities on temporary road closures to facilitate events, such as street parties.

The Home Office are currently preparing "The Good Practice Safety Guide for small and sporting events taking place on the highway, roads and public places", which will include advice on temporary road closures.

The Department plans to bring forward proposals by way of a Regulatory Reform Order to repeal section 16B of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 so that the requirements on local authorities for making orders for sporting, social or entertainment events lasting longer than three days held on road are relaxed.

School Buses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations apply to the safety of children who are fare-paying passengers on designated school buses; what regulations apply to the supervision of such children; and if he will make a statement. [20005]

Ms Buck: The same regulations apply to vehicles used on these services as apply to vehicles used on a local bus service available to the general public. There are no regulations as such that apply to the supervision of such children. Where local authorities consider that supervision is required on school buses they can stipulate this in their tender documents.

Terrorist Suspect Renditions

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to establish whether aircraft passing through UK airports are being used for the extraordinary rendition of terrorist suspects; and if he will make a statement. [19226]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* Where aircraft are making refuelling or other technical stops at UK airports there is no requirement on the operators to provide passenger lists. We are not currently aware of any evidence that aircraft passing through UK airports have been used for the purposes described.

Transport Studies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many studies of transport funded by his Department are in progress within the *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Greater London areas; and what the cost of such studies is in (i) internal departmental costs and (ii) fees and payments to consultants and research organisations. [20004]

Ms Buck: Essex county council receives funding from DfT for capital and maintenance programmes. The council determines its priorities and how it wishes to spend its funds through its Local Transport Plan. The authority has the choice to commission transport studies from funding and can decide who is best suited to undertake any such study.

The funding arrangements with the Mayor of London are different from the rest of the country. However, the principle remains the same with the mayor deciding whether funds should be spent on transport studies.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17883]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport recognises the benefits of volunteering both to the individual and the organisation as outlined in the Department's strategy "Working in Partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector".

The Department does not hold information on the number of volunteering positions offered in each of the last five years. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Property Sales (Vauxhall)

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how many properties the Church Commissioners have sold in Vauxhall constituency in the last two years. [19709]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners have sold 135 residential and seven commercial properties in the Vauxhall constituency in the last two years.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what assurances have been given to the tenants of properties sold by the Church Commissioners in Vauxhall constituency in the last two years regarding the level of their rent. [19710]

Sir Stuart Bell: The sale was of the freehold only; existing tenancy arrangements were not changed. Future tenancy arrangements will be for the new owners, a 50/50 partnership between a social housing provider and a private landlord.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Solicitor-General how many vehicles for which the Law Officers' Department are responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17978]

The Solicitor-General: For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles provided to departments by the Government Car and Dispatch Agency I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the Chief Executive of the GCDA, reference UIN 15087 and UIN 15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

I am told the Departments which the Law Officers' supervise, the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office, the Serious Fraud Office, the Treasury Solicitor's Department and HM CPS Inspectorate, do not own or lease any vehicles. The Crown Prosecution Service has 20 leased vehicles, none of which use retreaded tyres.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs by what means members of the public can gain access to information from the 1911 Census. [19844]

Ms Harman: It is Government policy that decennial census returns should remain closed for a period of 100 years. The National Archives is, therefore, developing plans to make the 1911 census publicly available online in 2012.

Access to Justice

Ian Lucas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure access to justice for residents of the EU working in England and Wales. [19068]

Ms Harman: The Government is working with European partners on a programme of measures aimed at making it easier for citizens to resolve civil disputes across European borders, to improve mutual recognition of judgments throughout Europe and to enable uncontested debts to be collected without going to court.

The Government has also implemented the European Union Directive on civil legal aid in cross-border cases. That directive will mean that UK and other European citizens who are eligible according to member states' rules will now be able to receive legal aid and assistance in civil disputes throughout the European Union.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance has been given to juvenile courts in relation to custodial sentences for offenders in breach of antisocial behaviour orders. [20740]

Ms Harman: At present no specific guidance has been issued to courts on sentencing children and young persons for breach of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs).

The responsibility for issuing definitive guidelines on sentencing rests with the Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC), which was established under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The SGC's work programme for 2005–06 includes the sentencing of young offenders, as well as for breaches of orders. The Council guidelines will be based on advice from the Sentencing Advisory Panel following a wide-ranging public consultation.

Court-admissible DNA Tests

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what guidance her Department issues to laboratories which wish to become accredited to provide court-admissible DNA tests; [20036]

(2) what measures are in place to ensure that laboratories not accredited to conduct court-admissible DNA tests do not submit DNA tests in court hearings; [20110]

(3) how many laboratories with accreditation to undertake court-admissible DNA testing have closed down in the last five years; [20111]

(4) how many laboratories have had their applications for licences to undertake court-admissible DNA tests turned down in each of the last four years for which figures are available; and what reasons were given for turning down their applications in each case; [20120]

(5) whether laboratories accredited to conduct court-admissible DNA testing are permitted to contract DNA tests out to other *(a)* accredited companies and *(b)* other unaccredited companies. [20121]

(6) what consultations were undertaken in the drawing up of the criteria applicable to laboratories applying for a licence to conduct DNA tests for paternity cases; [20122]

(7) what criteria her Department applies to laboratories applying for a licence to conduct court-admissible DNA tests; and when the criteria were most recently updated; [20123]

(8) how many laboratories licensed to undertake court-admissible DNA testing are operating in the UK; and how many laboratories have applications pending to undertake such testing; [20124]

(9) if she will list the laboratories licensed to conduct court-admissible DNA tests; and which *(a)* hold and *(b)* do not hold an International Standards Organisation 17025 Certificate; [20125]

(10) how many visits representatives of the Department made to the laboratories of DNA Diagnostics in Ohio, USA; and how many visits have been made by agencies based in the US on the Department's behalf; [21598]

(11) if she will list the companies accredited by the Department for conducting court-admissible DNA tests which have laboratories outside the UK; [21275]

(12) whether the Department has received representations concerning DNA Bioscience from the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) during 2005; [21276]

(13) if she will place in the Library a copy of the application for accreditation to conduct court-admissible DNA tests submitted by DNA Bioscience; [21599]

(14) what systems are in place to monitor the financial accounts of companies that have been accredited to conduct court-admissible DNA tests; [21600]

(15) what action will be taken by the Department against companies that supply incorrect information during the accreditation process for conducting court-admissible DNA tests. [21601]

Bridget Prentice: My Department is currently investigating the matters raised in the hon. Member's questions, and I will write when I am in a position to do so.

Cremations and Burials

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* cremations and *(b)* burials of deceased human bodies have been carried out in each of the last five years for which records are available. [18280]

Ms Harman: The number of cremations and burials of deceased human bodies in the years 2000–04 in the United Kingdom is not recorded centrally.

District Judge (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of appointing a district judge for Northamptonshire. [19786]

Ms Harman: I have made no assessment on the appointment of a District Judge (Magistrates' Courts) (DJ (MC)) for Northamptonshire. Her Majesty's Court Service Area Director for Northamptonshire has recently considered making a bid for a DJ (MC) post this year but decided not to make an application this year.

Electoral Administration System

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which provisions of the Electoral Administration Bill will apply to Northern Ireland. [20451]

Ms Harman: My Department introduced the Electoral Administration Bill on 11 October which will apply to Northern Ireland except clauses 9, 10, 11, 61 and 64 and related paragraphs in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library copies of the submissions received by her Department as part of its consultation on the Electoral Administration Bill. [15111]

Ms Harman: We received over 160 responses, within the deadline, to the policy paper on electoral administration which was put out on 25 May this year.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the written ministerial statement issued on 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the numbers of unregistered voters for *(a)* the UK as a whole and *(b)* each region of the UK. [20147]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission published its report Understanding Electoral Registration in September this year. The report provides a comprehensive analysis of registration rates and a detailed analysis of the reasons for non-registration.

The report shows that on 15 October 2000—the date the report's analysis is based—the level of non-registration among the eligible population in England and Wales was between 8 per cent. and 9 per cent.

This equates to around 3.5 million people.

The report is available on the Electoral Commission's website at:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Government are taking to improve the administration of elections, with particular reference to *(a)* ensuring access to voting for all, *(b)* securing the highest possible turnout and *(c)* reducing fraud. [19591]

Ms Harman: I refer my hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement dated 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS which sets out the measures we are taking to improve access to elections and reduce fraud. Improving turnout at elections is a complex issue, and something which we cannot address by legislation alone. However, some of the measures in the Bill—particularly giving returning officers the power to promote elections and providing funding for them to do so, and also enabling people to register after an election has been called—will assist further work in this area.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to make the marked electoral register available in electronic format. [20430]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on Tuesday 11 October 2005, gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations concerning the supply of certain electoral documents produced at UK elections, including copies of the marked register of electors. This regulatory power includes a provision to prescribe the form in which election documents are supplied.

Expert Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what checks medical experts are subjected to prior to giving evidence at trial. [20180]

Ms Harman: It is for the trial judge to determine if the witness being called to give expert evidence, including medical evidence; has acquired by study or experience sufficient knowledge of the subject to render his opinion of value in resolving the issues before the court.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether trial judges are required to establish the credentials of expert witnesses. [20182]

Ms Harman: It is for the trial judge in each case to determine if a witness is competent to give evidence as an expert.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received from public bodies on their entitlement to withhold information requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [19082]

Ms Harman: My Department has not received any formal representations from public bodies on their entitlement to withhold information requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

However, my Department, through the Clearing House, provides advice and assistance to Whitehall Departments on those requests for information that are particularly difficult or have implications across Government. Its advice is designed to ensure that a consistent and appropriate approach is taken to the application of the legislation. Since the Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January, nearly 3,000 cases have been referred to the Clearing House.

In addition, guidance is published on my Department's website for use by public bodies on *(a)* compliance with statutory requirements of the Act and *(b)* the appropriate application of exemptions to the Act. This information is freely available to all public bodies.

Judiciary (Disabled Judges)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many judges have a physical disability; and what steps the Department takes *(a)* to monitor disability among the judiciary and *(b)* to make a judicial career more accessible to those with a disability. [20[illegible]]

Ms Harman: Full data on the incidence and type of disability in the serving judiciary are not currently available. We are currently considering how to improve the disability information we hold.

We are working with organisations and individuals with an expertise or interest in disability equality, such as the Disability Rights Commission, to explore what more needs to be done to support disabled judges and candidates for appointment.

The Lord Chancellor will make a statement on judicial diversity in early November, in which he will outline the work to be taken forward on disability.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was levied in fines by each magistrates court in Greater London in each of the last five years; how much was written off by each court; and what percentage of fines was collected by each court. [18675]

Ms Harman: Information on fines imposed and collected is provided by the 42 HMCS areas in England and Wales. The following table shows the total amounts imposed, total amounts written off and the payment rate in London for the last five financial years. Information broken down by individual magistrates courts is not centrally available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Enforcement of penalties London (GLMCA pre-April 2005)

Financial year	*Amount, imposed total (£)*	*New amount owed total (£)*	*Total amount/ written off (£)*	*Payment rate*[1]
April 2001-March 2002[2]	60,828,532	77,640,695	13,916,583	46
April 2002-March 2003[2]	64,793,641	111,347,014	13,688,849	40
April 2003-March 2004	51,000,859	59,713,621	15,324,667	66
April 2004-March 2005	39,674,566	60,260,556	1,038,403	68
April 2005-August 2005	17,988,694	24,676,677	257,540	60

[1] The primary performance indicator is the payment rate. It is defined as the amount paid into court as a percentage of the new net amount owed.
Payment rate = Amount paid divided by new net amount owed
Methods of calculating the new net amounts owed have changed over the last five years and are detailed below:
September 1999 to March 2003—new net amount owed includes legally cancelled amounts, civil moneys and confiscation orders
April 2003 to December 2003—new net amount owed excludes legally cancelled amounts, civil moneys and confiscation orders
January 2004 to July 2004—new net amount owed excludes legally cancelled amounts, administratively cancelled amounts, civil moneys and confiscation orders
July 2004 onwards—new net amount owed excludes legally cancelled amounts,
administratively cancelled amounts, civil, moneys and confiscation orders, but includes amounts written back
[2] From April 2003 onwards, confiscation and civil amounts have not been included in any of the enforcement calculations. It is not possible to separate those elements out from the figures before that date.
Note:
As a result of these revisions, direct year-on-year comparisons cannot be made.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent over the last five years on *(a)* maintaining and *(b)* refurbishing (i) Barry, (ii) Neath, (iii) Port Talbot and (iv) Aberdare magistrates courts. [20816]

Ms Harman: Expenditure incurred on refurbishment was not separately recorded from other types of maintenance. The following table provides the aggregated sums recorded by the local authority, over the last five financial years, of spend on maintenance and capital maintenance projects. It is likely that the spend on capital maintenance was mainly in respect of refurbishment works.

£

Magistrates court	*Maintenance*	*Capital maintenance*
Barry	355,281.70	231,460.90
Neath	232,189.47	103,641.85
Port Talbot	295,231.00	231,224.59
Aberdare	563,191.00	110,579.59

Marcus Downie

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what are the reasons for the length of time it took to conclude the inquest into the death of Marcus Downie; and if she will make a statement. [19194]

Ms Harman: The Essex and Thurrock coroner has explained the reasons for delay in holding this inquest. Following the death by hanging of Marcus Downie on 11 May 2002 in HMP Chelmsford there was a police investigation and an internal Prison Service inquiry. At the pre-inquest hearing in May 2003 the family's representatives made several requests for further information, including expert psychiatric evidence. A date in September 2003 was provisionally booked for the inquest, but the coroner decided to await the House of Lords judgments in two relevant cases, Middleton and Sacker which were delivered in March 2004. Staff shortages in the coroner's office prevented progress during the summer and autumn of 2004 but a further pre-inquest hearing was held on in January 2005 and, after difficulties in finding a suitable courtroom for a lengthy jury inquest, it was held between 3 and 12 October 2005.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17333]

Bridget Prentice: Figures for air miles accrued by Ministers are not held by this Department. All ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the "Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers" and guidance for Ministers on the use of air miles is set out in the "Ministerial Code". This guidance makes clear that air miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, it is possible for Ministers to donate them to charity if permitted under the terms of the airline's scheme. Similar rules are in place for officials.

Persistent and Prolific Offenders

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidelines she has issued on how criminal cases involving persistent and prolific offenders should be treated by the courts. [19790]

Ms Harman: Guidance to the courts on handling prolific and other priority offender cases was issued by the senior presiding judge in April 2005.

The PPO Strategy requires courts to provide a "Premium Service" so that relevant cases are listed expeditiously, trial readiness is checked regularly, ineffective trials are always monitored, enforcement warrants are given priority and orders are flagged up to the Prison, Probation and Youth Offending Services, as appropriate.

Postal Voting

Mike Wood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make it a requirement for returning officers to make available a marked register indicating postal voters. [19655]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 11 October 2005, makes provision for the creation of a marked list of returned postal votes at future UK elections.

Prison Deaths

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the inquests that have been completed in the past five years following a death in prison; what the date of the *(a)* death and *(b)* inquest was in each case; and if she will make a statement. [19202]

Ms Harman: The information can be found in a table, copies of which I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Voter Turnout

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take to increase turnout in the next general election. [20183]

Ms Harman: Tackling low turnout at elections is a complex issue and one we cannot deal with through legislation alone. However, some of the measures in the Electoral Administration Bill—particularly giving Returning Officers the power to promote elections and providing funding for them to do so, and also enabling people to register after an election has been called—should help to improve turnout at elections.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Architects Registration Board

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with the Architects Registration Board concerning its disciplinary procedures. [19958]

Yvette Cooper: There have been no discussions as the Architects Act 1997 gives the Government no powers to intervene in disciplinary matters.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have discussed with the Architects Registration Board rules of propriety in choosing members employed in quasi-judicial inquiries. [19959]

Yvette Cooper: There have been no discussions as the Government has no powers to intervene. Provisions for the membership of the Professional Conduct Committee are prescribed by the Architects Act 1997 as amended by The Architects (Professional Conduct Committee) Amendment Order 2004 (SI 2004 No. 655).

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he intends to review the operation of the Architects Registration Board. [19962]

Yvette Cooper: The Government has no current plans for a review.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17993]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Seven vehicles for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. All seven are specialist vehicles at the Fire Service College, that do not travel at speeds in excess of 20mph.

For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles provided to the Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the Chief Executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 and UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library of the House.

This answer does not include vehicles operated by the Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Highbury

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received concerning the planning application for the re-development of

Highbury Stadium into Highbury Square; and whether he has made (*a*) decision and (*b*) statement on the application. [21142]

Yvette Cooper: Planning permission was granted by Islington Council on 30 September 2005 for the redevelopment of Highbury Stadium for a predominately residential scheme. The planning application was not referred to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister the First Secretary of State and he received no representations or requests to intervene.

Homelessness

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were found to be unintentionally homeless but not in a priority need category in Gravesham in 2005. [19834]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected in respect of households, rather than persons. The number of households reported by Gravesham after completion of enquiries to be eligible, unintentionally homeless but not in a priority need category between 1 January and 30 June 2005, was 99.

Housing

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what house building programmes have been commissioned in Kent since 1997, broken down by borough council. [19833]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of houses that have been built in Kent since 1997 are tabled as follows:

Borough/district	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Ashford	467	707	725	941	753	726	910
Canterbury	489	610	540	615	501	305	338
Dartford	556	368	182	86	322	646	726
Dover	204	276	212	23	459	177	284
Gravesham	95	103	81	61	137	137	204
Maidstone	444	262	755	416	722	444	372
Medway	702	698	719	678	603	676	733
Sevenoaks	439	-14	285	183	199	143	73
Shepway	281	486	513	354	410	400	369
Swale	321	705	576	654	659	668	570
Thanet	366	268	286	297	367	334	252
Tonbridge and Malling	417	414	346	273	337	589	475
Tunbridge Wells	317	308	274	247	222	376	240
Total	5,098	5,191	5,444	4,828	5,691	5,621	5,546

Source:
Kent county council South East of England Regional Assembly

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South-West Surrey (Mr. Hunt) of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 612W, on housing, if he will break down the figures by London borough. [19687]

Yvette Cooper: Estimates for densities of new residential dwellings for London boroughs are from Land Use Change Statistics and are shown as follows. The densities are very variable from one year to the next as they can be affected by a small number of developments in each borough.

Density of new residential dwellings built: London boroughs, 1985–2004

Dwellings per hectare

London borough	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
City of London	—	—	—	—	50	667	—	—	—	—
Barking and Dagenham	167	—	—	65	63	36	53	67	86	42
Barnet	20	—	—	44	37	35	41	45	49	46
Bexley	11	—	—	45	37	32	37	38	33	42
Brent	33	—	—	77	59	82	66	62	88	43
Bromley	14	17	20	31	31	22	23	30	28	26
Camden	—	—	—	68	65	50	21	84	104	88
Croydon	16	19	28	40	27	32	37	29	31	44
Ealing	17	—	33	72	12	49	64	58	54	88
Enfield	9	—	59	60	81	56	52	45	64	36
Greenwich	32	62	58	47	48	45	64	50	48	55
Hackney	—	67	74	58	62	43	36	57	64	93
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	—	—	75	140	70	38	38	19	43
Haringey	13	—	60	41	59	43	59	52	63	55
Harrow	22	—	47	30	39	48	35	48	40	31
Havering	20	33	9	35	36	30	21	37	37	36
Hillingdon	11	15	76	52	43	24	25	22	22	31
Hounslow	19	28	300	37	48	52	41	52	40	39
Islington	400	—	—	60	43	76	45	44	61	104
Kensington and Chelsea	200	—	—	71	100	98	41	51	85	68
Kingston upon Thames	16	—	43	42	50	41	41	37	36	37
Lambeth	33	33	35	87	75	48	43	69	48	103
Lewisham	20	87	78	55	52	65	64	59	64	45
Merton	22	8	64	51	88	48	49	37	39	43
Newham	—	67	40	54	50	51	53	56	44	48

Density of new residential dwellings built: London boroughs, 1985–2004

Dwellings per hectare

London borough	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Redbridge	32	—	48	64	59	33	48	40	43	44
Richmond upon Thames	29	15	52	42	38	32	41	39	57	56
Southwark	40	—	37	136	63	79	78	77	84	67
Sutton	33	36	46	59	41	40	46	45	51	50
Tower Hamlets	—	57	113	76	59	95	105	63	89	68
Waltham Forest	44	50	40	59	49	55	57	61	57	48
Wandsworth	77	—	28	75	60	69	59	80	54	50
Westminster	133	—	60	99	142	134	54	75	104	131

London borough	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London	—	5	80	230	165	266	960	—	—	—
Barking and Dagenham	58	43	47	44	39	42	41	54	104	190
Barnet	37	50	47	24	29	68	40	58	66	41
Bexley	56	36	23	38	33	29	35	28	38	10
Brent	47	90	45	44	41	39	56	72	74	82
Bromley	24	31	28	25	27	47	25	21	40	46
Camden	60	76	54	88	107	112	43	102	130	—
Croydon	30	31	33	26	26	31	48	51	46	31
Ealing	46	63	71	56	56	71	63	47	77	72
Enfield	35	47	59	48	47	41	34	67	90	77
Greenwich	48	48	41	37	41	70	33	42	53	83
Hackney	56	50	77	70	73	90	81	108	106	204
Hammersmith and Fulham	91	84	62	85	72	83	55	68	52	—
Haringey	52	44	64	58	85	80	49	70	107	76
Harrow	24	18	36	23	49	41	27	36	84	103
Havering	36	34	27	44	39	31	44	42	31	56
Hillingdon	30	33	38	35	35	41	34	66	55	47
Hounslow	45	66	46	69	54	66	47	57	121	88
Islington	43	114	78	119	130	105	70	98	86	158
Kensington and Chelsea	56	84	95	91	107	119	25	142	80	—
Kingston upon Thames	26	46	37	53	33	46	35	54	92	59
Lambeth	66	67	73	76	72	89	74	90	127	80
Lewisham	50	85	61	73	83	31	55	83	57	122
Merton	51	56	51	43	46	45	77	49	109	58
Newham	49	56	45	60	60	57	79	81	97	257
Redbridge	56	40	40	43	34	26	34	34	110	100
Richmond upon Thames	61	32	32	64	48	45	48	62	56	59
Southwark	66	74	60	66	112	87	105	61	116	109
Sutton	51	38	33	32	35	38	36	55	49	47
Tower Hamlets	94	80	95	82	130	140	80	105	189	280
Waltham Forest	47	52	46	51	37	38	27	57	36	120
Wandsworth	52	55	42	71	66	72	58	43	158	154
Westminster	97	138	71	119	182	42	169	113	149	110

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are on the housing register in each London borough. [19158]

Yvette Cooper: The requested data based on the latest available year are tabled.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the Housing Association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a Housing Association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Number of households on the housing register as at 1 April 2005

Local authority	*Number of households*
Barking and Dagenham	2,321
Barnet	13,627
Bexley	4,528
Brent	17,351
Bromley	2,998
Camden	16,532
City of London	1,204
Croydon	8,856
Ealing	14,324
Enfield	7,872
Greenwich	7,666
Hackney	7,744
Hammersmith and Fulham	8,384
Haringey	19,930
Harrow	4,944
Havering	3,477
Hillingdon	7,471
Hounslow	10,382
Islington	6,326
Kensington and Chelsea	9,436
Kingston upon Thames	4,903
Lambeth	10,648
Lewisham	18,279
Merton	5,188
Newham	25,317
Redbridge	7,941
Richmond upon Thames	4,898

Number of households on the housing register as at 1 April 2005

Local authority	*Number of households*
Southwark	7,548
Sutton	3,724
Tower Hamlets	21,183
Waltham Forest	8,837
Wandsworth	8,668
Westminster	6,565
London	309,072

Source:
ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are in council housing in Kent, broken down by borough council. [19800]

Yvette Cooper: Data on the number of people in council housing in Kent are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has information on the number of dwellings owned by each district authority in Kent. This data as at 1 April 2005 are given in the following table:

Local authority stock in Kent, by district, at 1 April 2005

Ashford	5,416
Canterbury	5,320
Dartford	4,437
Dover	4,753
Gravesham	6,132
Maidstone	0
Sevenoaks	0
Shepway	3,520
Swale	16
Thanet	3,180
Tonbridge and Malling	0
Tunbridge Wells	33
Kent	32,807

Note:
Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) authorities could retain small amount of stock (normally below 100).
Source:
ODPM Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return.

Mr. Khan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the council allocations were for housing transfers into *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three, *(d)* four and *(e)* five bedroom properties in each London borough in the last year for which figures are available. [19213]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the number of local authority lettings which involve transfers is not available by number of bedrooms centrally. However, the following information on lettings which relates to transfers is collected:

The number of dwellings let through mobility arrangements;

The number of dwellings let through mutual exchanges;

The number of dwellings let to existing tenants transferring within authority's own stock.

Of the third of these, the number of tenants transferring to a dwelling with fewer bedrooms is also collected.

All this information by London borough for 2004–05 is provided in the table as follows.

Number of lettings to local authority dwellings related to transfers in the London boroughs, 2004–05

			Dwellings let to existing tenants within own stock	
Local authority	*Dwellings let through mobility arrangements*	*Dwellings let through mutual exchanges*	*Total*	*of which: Number to fewer bedrooms*
Barking and Dagenham	23	127	667	79
Barnet	0	88	168	40
Bexley	0	0	0	0
Brent	44	16	134	32
Bromley	0	0	0	0
Camden	31	94	453	46
City of London	1	5	32	0
Croydon	10	159	201	51
Ealing	1	15	174	66
Enfield	8	150	193	13
Greenwich	10	106	516	110
Hackney	3	41	201	21
Hammersmith and Fulham	11	74	252	31
Haringey	23	66	117	45
Harrow	5	21	49	15
Havering	24	56	328	107
Hillingdon	2	101	125	21
Hounslow	12	133	229	47
Islington	3	101	353	89
Kensington and Chelsea	0	15	91	25
Kingston upon Thames	15	46	60	18
Lambeth	9	36	360	61
Lewisham	0	148	363	272
Merton	0	51	77	21
Newham	70	88	213	25
Redbridge	0	30	85	32
Richmond upon Thames	0	0	0	0
Southwark	18	128	631	103
Sutton	0	98	105	22

Number of lettings to local authority dwellings related to transfers in the London boroughs, 2004–05

Local authority	*Dwellings let through mobility arrangements*	*Dwellings let through mutual exchanges*	*Dwellings let to existing tenants within own stock*	
			Total	*of which: Number to fewer bedrooms*
Tower Hamlets	0	84	312	96
Waltham Forest	48	101	94	10
Wandsworth	4	92	258	46
Westminster	1	29	175	20
London	376	2,299	7,016	1,564

Note:
A zero figure indicates the authority is a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer authority. All their stock has been transferred to the Registered Social Landlords.
Source:
ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix Returns

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what requirement there is for tenant involvement in registered social landlords after transfer of council housing in large scale voluntary transfers; and how performance is audited after transfers have taken place. [17861]

Yvette Cooper: It is normally most appropriate for a transfer RSL's governing board to comprise one-third tenants, no more than one-third local authority nominees, and at least one-third independent members.

All RSLs have a duty to publish a statement of how they will involve their residents in improving the association's services and how this involvement will influence outcomes. Each year, associations must review the effectiveness of the statement and prepare an impact assessment.

The Housing Corporation monitors compliance with all regulatory requirements, which are taken into account when preparing Housing Corporation Assessments of association performance.

The corporation also works closely with the Audit Commission in relation to their inspection of housing associations, which includes consideration of tenant involvement.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the levels of tenant satisfaction *(a)* before and after large-scale voluntary transfer, *(b)* before and after the establishment of arm's length management organisations, *(c)* of tenants in privatised council housing and *(d)* of tenants remaining in council controlled housing. [17863]

Yvette Cooper: Data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) for 2004–05 show that 74 per cent. of tenants of registered social landlords (RSLs) are satisfied with the housing services provided by their landlord, and 67 per cent. of local authority tenants are satisfied. Housemark data for 2004–05 show that 75 of tenants of arm's length management organisations (ALMOs) are satisfied.

The SEH 2004–05 also asked RSL tenants whose homes had been transferred from local authority ownership since 2000 how the service provided by the RSL compared to that from the local authority. 27 per cent. of tenants reported that the service from the RSL was better than the local authority, 62 per cent. said it was the same and 11 per cent. said it was worse. No comparable question was asked for ALMOs.

Housing Associations

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the value for grant assessments of each housing association produced by the comparator developed by the National Audit Office and the Housing Corporation. [19851]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation does not yet have all the information necessary to produce the "Value for Grant Comparator" fully. It is currently populating the comparator with the limited data it has available and testing it. The corporation expects the comparator to become fully operational from 2006.

Incapacity Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government has made of the *(a)* regional variations in take-up of incapacity benefit and the *(b)* implications for regional economic development; and if he will make a statement. [18782]

Yvette Cooper: Within the English regions, there are large regional variations in the take up of incapacity benefit (IB) with 11.2 per cent. of the working age population claiming IB in the North East compared to 4.6 per cent. in the South East. The three northern regions (North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside) account for over 860,000 claimants, almost 40 per cent. of the English total, yet their working age population account for just 28 per cent. of the English total. Wales and Scotland also have high proportions of their working age population on incapacity benefit.

High rates of inactivity will undoubtedly affect the economic performance of a region. The Government and its partners in the regions are committed to improving the economic performance of each region, which is why the ODPM, HMT and DTI have a joint Public Service Agreement (PSA) to:

> "Make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all the English regions by 2008 and over the long term reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the regions, demonstrating progress by 2006"

The Government is similarly also committed to increasing economic development and employment opportunities in Scotland and Wales and more generally works in partnership with the devolved administrations to promote prosperity in all parts of the UK.

Employment is seen as a key driver in this target and supporting incapacity benefit claimants into work is essential in reducing the employment disparities between the regions. DWP's Pathways to Work will play a crucial role in achieving this target across the whole of Great Britain and will also assist the Northern Way's target to get 100,000 people off IB by 2014. By October 2006, 11 of the 15 English Pathways will be operational in the three northern regions. In addition to this, the Northern Way will run complementary IB pilots and the first of these is due to start on 7 November 2005 in the district of Easington, which has one of the highest rates of IB claimants at 19.7 per cent. (in 2004). By October 2006 the number of Pathways to Work pilots will increase to four in Wales and three in Scotland.

Local Authority Pensions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Oldham, East and Saddleworth (Mr. Woolas) of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 878W, on local authority pensions, what the change in an average council tax bill he expects as a result of the contribution that local authorities are making to local government pension scheme funds. [21136]

Mr. Woolas: Decisions on the contribution local authorities make to their pensions scheme is a matter for individual authorities, as are decisions on the level of council tax.

National Society for Epilepsy

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to announce the decision on the planning inquiry into the National Society for Epilepsy's appeal against the rejection of their planning applications to develop its site at Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire. [20479]

Yvette Cooper: The main parties to the appeal were informed on 17 August 2005 that the First Secretary of State, my right Hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, expects to issue his decision on or before 23 November 2005.

Thames Gateway

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Thames Gateway Communities Plan development will be on land designated as *(a)* brownfield, *(b)* greenfield, *(c)* flood plains (brownfield) and *(d)* flood plains (greenfield). [17230]

Yvette Cooper: The precise location of future development in the Thames Gateway during the course of the regeneration programme will be dependent on a number of factors: the land allocated in local development frameworks, the sites attracting planning applications, the success of those applications and their ability to satisfy national planning policy intentions. Exact proportions cannot be predetermined.

However in the Thames Gateway, as elsewhere, all new developments must have regard to national planning policies, including the national target set in Planning Policy Guidance note 3: Housing (PPG3) for 60 per cent. of additional housing, including conversions, to be built on previously developed land.

In the Gateway that percentage can be exceeded because there is a significant reservoir of brownfield land. The area comprises only 2 per cent. of the south east of England, but contains 17 per cent. of its brownfield land.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's target is to deliver 80 per cent. of new development in the Thames Gateway on brownfield land, which we are presently exceeding.

As to the proportions of development on flood plains, flood risk assessments indicating whether it would be appropriate to develop on a site are determining factors in the eventual location of development. All development will be in line with Planning Policy Guidance note: Development and Flood Risk (PPG25), which applies a sequential risk-based approach to prevent inappropriate development in flood risk areas. To support the effective application of planning policy, the Office of the Deputy Minister is funding Strategic Flood Risk Assessments across the Thames Gateway to assess flood risk and inform planning decisions. PPG25 advises that applications for development in flood risk areas should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment appropriate to the location, scale and nature of the development which identifies the risks of flooding to and from the development, measures to be taken to reduce those risks and how any residual risk will be managed.

Travellers

Peter Viggers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to introduce changes to the law relating to unauthorised Traveller encampments. [20378]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have established a new Gypsy and Traveller Unit and one of its aims is to help local authorities improve the use of enforcement powers, including powers to tackle antisocial behaviour. The unit will also be looking at the operation of these powers to see if further action is needed.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United States personnel have been committed to NATO's International Security Assistance Force role in Afghanistan by the US Secretary of Defence from May 2006 onwards; and if he will make a statement. [21140]

John Reid: Details on future US deployments to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan are a matter for the US Government. Details of future deployments by those nations contributing to ISAF will become clearer as plans for ISAF expansion develop.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the operational status of the United Kingdom's aircraft carriers. [20371]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The operational status of the UK's three aircraft carriers is configured so that at least one is always available for tasking by CINCFLEET.

HMS Illustrious is the aircraft carrier currently available for tasking.

Civilian Staff

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress he has made in the negotiations with the trade union side about an enhanced redundancy package for civilian staff employed by the Department in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [20450]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Trade Unions (TGWU) wrote to me on 27 May 2005 outlining proposals for an enhanced redundancy package for civilian staff. I replied on 11 July 2005 stating that officials were currently examining the proposals. This work is still under way and no further negotiations with the Trade Unions have so far taken place.

Members' Visits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many hon. Members have visited the tunnels controlled by his Department in Gibraltar in each of the last five years; [18960]

(2) how many *(a)* politicians, *(b)* military personnel and *(c)* others from overseas have visited the tunnels controlled by his Department in Gibraltar in each of the last five years; [18962]

(3) in what circumstances hon. Members may be refused access to the tunnels controlled by his Department in Gibraltar; [18963]

(4) what the correct procedure is for hon. Members to apply for permission to visit *(a)* departmental sites and *(b)* the tunnels controlled by his Department in Gibraltar. [18964]

Mr. Touhig: Applications from hon. Members for permission to visit departmental sites, including the tunnels, controlled by the MOD in Gibraltar should be submitted to me. Such applications in relation to the tunnels may be refused if there is any on-going structural or maintenance works in progress, or military training exercises taking place; applications must also take account of the availability of a tunnel guide. Records of tunnel visits are only available from January 2004 until the present date, details of which are shown in the table:

	Number
Members of Parliament or other UK politicians	0
UK military personnel	425
Overseas personnel	48

Submarines

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to *(a)* replace and *(b)* extend the life of the Vanguard class submarine; and if he will make a statement. [20675]

John Reid: I have nothing to add to the answers I gave to the hon. Members for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1217W and for New Forest East (Dr. Lewis) on 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 466W.

UK Military Advice/Training

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the training schemes available to members of overseas armed forces *(a)* at Ministry of Defence establishments in the UK and *(b)* provided by members of the UK armed forces overseas. [21046]

Mr. Touhig: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1062–64W.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) to which countries the UK has sent advisory military and training teams in each year since 1997; [15939]

(2) in which countries the UK has stationed military personnel for training purposes in each year since 1997; and how many such personnel were involved in each case. [15941]

Mr. Ingram: For a comprehensive list of countries where we have provided in-country training since 1997 I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 888W to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing). It lists countries in which a range of training activities (vice formally established teams) has taken place since 1997, without stating a breakdown of manpower.

The requested breakdown of information regarding the breadth of where we have stationed military personnel for training purposes, broken down by each year since 1997, is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the following list is a summary of established in-country training teams (as opposed to the more general range of training activities previously provided) and their existing manning levels:

Country	*Effective dates*	*Strength*
Antigua	From 1999	6
Bahrain	Closed August 2005	—
Barbados	To 1999	—
Bermuda	—	2
Bosnia-Herzegovina	From 2004	3
Brunei	—	39
Czech Republic	From 2003	26
Estonia	From 2003	1
Ghana	—	9
Kenya	From 2000	12
Kuwait	—	50
Oman	—	88
Saudi Arabia	—	15
Sierra Leone	—	90
Singapore	—	2
Slovakia	From 2003	10

Country	Effective dates	Strength
South Africa	—	9
United Arab Emirates	—	5
Zimbabwe	Closed 2000	—

Note:
Where no effective date is shown, UK had a training/advisory presence prior to 1997.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Africa

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to channel aid directly to the people in Africa through non-governmental organisations. [19822]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) endeavours to ensure that all our aid benefits poor people, whether provided through national governments, multilateral organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Whenever possible, DFID provides aid to African countries through their own systems in support of their own plans. This ensures country ownership of development efforts and helps build capacity in countries to continue delivering services in the long-term. This includes means providing aid to the state in the form of Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) or support to specific sector, such as education and health.

DFID also recognises the important role that non-governmental organisations play in tackling poverty. For example, during 2004–05, DFID provided £328 million to UK civil society organisations working in developing countries throughout the world. And more than £70 million of humanitarian assistance to Africa in 2004–05 was channelled through non-governmental organisations.

DFID plans to continue channelling aid through non-governmental organisations in a number of ways. The Civil Society Challenge Fund is DFID's main channel of support for UK-based non-government organisations. We also provide reliable funding to non-governmental organisations on the basis of agreed outcomes through Partnership Programme Agreements and our bilateral programme in Africa will continue to work with non-governmental organisations to deliver humanitarian and development assistance to poor people.

Darfur

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to improve the humanitarian situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan. [19823]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian needs in Darfur are huge and major challenges remain. 1.8 million people have been displaced from their homes and 3.4 million people are relying on humanitarian assistance. The UK is at the forefront of the humanitarian effort. We have provided £92 million in humanitarian assistance to Darfur since September 2003 and are the second biggest bilateral donor after the US. The UK is also leading in work with other donors to improve the co-ordination of humanitarian donor funding to Sudan.

However, humanitarian assistance is not the solution for Darfur; only a political agreement will result in lasting improvements in the humanitarian situation in Darfur and allow people to return to their homes. To this end we fully support the African Union (AU) mediated peace talks in Abuja, at which a UK observer is present.

Security is also a concern and the recent deterioration in the security situation, particularly in West Darfur, could have significant impact on humanitarian relief operations. Contingency planning for disruption is underway by the humanitarian agencies and we stand ready to provide additional support if required. The UN is confident however that it can meet immediate humanitarian needs with existing resources.

The AU Mission also has a vital role to play in improving security, and is having a positive impact where it is deployed. The UK is fully supporting the ongoing expansion of the AU's force in Darfur to almost 8,000. We have allocated an additional £19 million to help the AU achieve this, bringing the total UK contribution to the mission to almost £32 million.

Debt Relief

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he expects negotiations to be completed to finalise the details of the International Development Association and African Development Fund aspects of the G8 debt proposal. [20618]

Hilary Benn: The G8's proposals for 100 per cent. International Development Association (IDA), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and African Development Fund (AfDF) debt stock cancellation for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) were discussed at the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and IMF. The IDA and IMF components were subsequently agreed by the Development and International Monetary and Financial Committees at those meetings. The approval process for African Development Fund (AfDF) component is being taken forward separately at African Development Bank.

Negotiations are under way to resolve some outstanding technical details on the proposals, as well as on the implementation of financing assurances from donors. We expect agreement on these issues over the coming weeks, and that detailed implementation plans will be discussed by the Boards of Directors at each institution in November. We remain confident that implementation of the debt relief will begin in 2006.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what governance measures the Heavily Indebted Poor Completion Point countries will need to meet in order to be eligible to benefit from the G8 debt proposal; and if he will make a statement. [20619]

Hilary Benn: Countries will qualify for debt stock cancellation under the proposals by completing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). By

definition, Completion Point HIPCs have demonstrated a sustained commitment to poverty reduction and sound macroeconomic management that provides confidence that the savings from debt relief will be used for poverty reduction. Good governance is part of this, with standards drawn from national strategies. Once countries have qualified for debt stock cancellation, they will get 100 per cent. irrevocable relief. There will be no ongoing conditionally.

Countries that have already completed the HIPC Initiative must demonstrate that they have maintained their commitment to poverty reduction and good macro-economic management in order to qualify for relief. They must therefore have remained current with their repayment obligations to the International Financial Institutions, and not have experienced serious lapses, including in governance, such that their International Monetary Fund (IMF) programmes would be at risk.

In addition, extra donor resources will be provided to the World Bank and African Development Bank to compensate for the costs of the debt stock cancellation. These resources will be allocated to all poor countries through the Institutions' existing Performance Based Allocation System, thereby providing a strong incentive for good policy (including governance) and performance. The World Bank and IMF staff will also continue to monitor and report on the overall efficiency of public expenditure as well as on progress in reducing corruption and enhancing transparency in recipient countries.

Developing World

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to tackle *(a)* famine and *(b)* disease epidemics in the developing world. [19824]

Mr. Thomas: In responding to famine, the Department for International Development (DFID) provides funding to the World Food Programme (£78 million in 2004, including approx £15 million through the European Community), Governments and non-governmental organisations. However, DFID also attaches considerable importance to disaster prevention. In the area of food security this includes supporting reforms in agricultural methods and promoting livelihoods that are less susceptible to the effects of famine, by working with partner governments, local communities and multilateral agencies including the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. DFID is also supporting the creation of social safety nets such as income support and social insurance, bans and grants. These aim to limit the numbers of people who require emergency food aid.

DFID's approach to tackling disease epidemics in the developed world is to balance prevention with reducing the impact of epidemics when they do occur. Where vaccines exist they are a very cost effective way of preventing disease. We therefore fund the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunisations and Polio Eradication Initiative and also support the research and development of new vaccines and other preventive therapy for infectious diseases.

Our support to multilateral organisations such as the World Health Organisation, UNICEF and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria are designed to both prevent epidemics happening and reduce the impact once they have occurred.

Our bilateral programmes in the health sector are designed to strengthen health systems both to prevent and mitigate the impact of epidemics. Getting well organised communicable disease control systems in place is crucial for effectively tackling diarrhoeal diseases, pneumonia and vaccine preventable disease epidemics as well as those associated with HIV, TB and Malaria.

Malawi/Niger

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to ascertain the need for humanitarian assistance in *(a)* Malawi and *(b)* Niger. [19753]

Hilary Benn: Malawi has an early warning system, the Malawi Vulnerability System Committee (MVAC). DFID finances the secretariat. The MVAC made its first assessment of the need for humanitarian assistance as soon as harvest and other data were available and reported in May. By June, food aid was being delivered. 1.8 million people have received food aid to date; it is planned to feed 2.8 million by December. The MVAC is updating its assessment and will provide a preliminary revision next week, with a full reassessment by early November. DFID's commitment to humanitarian assistance for this year's food shortages in Malawi totals £15.32 million. The UK stands ready to do more if more people need to be fed.

In Niger, a major humanitarian relief operation has been under way over the past three months in response to a food crisis affecting an estimated three million people, with the lives of up to 150,000 children at risk. The humanitarian operation is now working at full capacity and has helped to avert a major catastrophe. The UK has played an important part, being one of the first donors to respond when the United Nations and NGO relief agencies alerted the world to the severity of the crisis. To date, around 2.8 million people have received food aid and more than 90,000 children have received life-saving nutritional therapy. Food is also under harvest, and thanks to good rains, a bumper crop is expected. Nonetheless, the relief effort will continue in the months ahead, with priority being given to the needs of malnourished children and to those who will not benefit fully or adequately from the new harvest. Much work also remains to help those who have suffered during the crisis to recover, and in the longer term to put in place welfare safety nets and other measures to help the most impoverished people of Niger avoid further crises of this kind. DFID sent a humanitarian adviser to Niger last June, to neighbouring countries in August, and to Niger again this month. On the basis of his report, we shall be reviewing needs, and options to provide humanitarian assistance to the recovery process.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department has provided to Niger in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [15120]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not had a bilateral development assistance programme with Niger during the past five years, but does provide significant support through multilateral channels such as the United Nations agencies and the EC development programme, of which the estimated UK share amounted to £6.2 million in 2002. We have also provided debt relief, humanitarian assistance and small project support. Details are shown in the following table.

Having reached completion point under the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative in April 2004, Niger is now benefiting from increased debt relief, including £4.513 million (in 2004 net present value) on bilateral debts to the UK through the Paris Club. The UK will also provide US$915,190 (approximately £520,000) to Niger in 2005 as part of our multilateral debt relief initiative (to be superseded from next year by debt stock cancellation as recently agreed at the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In February, as part of efforts to strengthen Anglo-French cooperation on development issues in Africa, DFID agreed to provide £7 million initially through the French development programme in support of Niger's basic education policy, with particular emphasis on getting more girls into primary education.

In recent months DFID has made a significant contribution to the food relief operation in Niger. Our total support of £3.25 million is among the top three bilateral contributions, and amongst the quickest. Our funding is contributing to the general feeding of up to 1,700,000 people, nutritional therapy for up to 60,000 malnourished children, emergency health care for up to 1,750,000 vulnerable people, and emergency livestock interventions for up to 21,000 people.

Total UK aid to Niger

£000

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Financial Aid					
HIPC Trust Funds	—	—	126	61	2,973
TC					
Wholly Financed Personnel: Long Term	—	—	—	—	—
Consultancies	—	—	—	—	—
Grant and Other Aid in Kind					
Heads of Mission Projects and Gifts	15	20	—	—	35
JFS Accountable Grants	130	108	58	58	31
Civil Society Challenge Fund	5	—	—	—	28
Humanitarian Assistance					
Food Aid—through UN Channels	—	—	—	—	—
Disaster Relief—through NGO Channels	—	—	—	—	—
Disaster Relief—through UN Channels	—	—	—	—	—
Debt Relief					
Naples Terms	—	—	—	—	4,400
Toronto Terms	137	109	82	54	33
Trinidad Terms	710	110	100	90	80
Total	997	347	366	263	7,581

Nicaragua

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assistance he is providing to the people of the Atlantic Coast in Nicaragua; [20536]

(2) if he will make the disbursement of further UK funds in Nicaragua dependent upon a significant proportion of those funds being spent to help those on the Atlantic coast. [20537]

Mr. Thomas *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Poverty, both rural and urban, is pervasive in Nicaragua. While the figure for rural poverty in the Atlantic coast is higher than the rural average (77 per cent. compared to 64 per cent.) there are many other regions in the country displaying similar, or worse poverty indicators. Less than 20 per cent. of Nicaragua's poor live in the Atlantic coast. DFID, therefore, makes decisions on the extent and nature of its support on the basis of the Government's commitment to tackle poverty throughout the country rather than in just one part.

DFID does, however, recognise the particular challenges of the Atlantic coast. We seek to tackle these through a combination of direct support to the area and through high-level dialogue with the Government.

A significant proportion of DFID's programme directly benefits Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. Our HIV/AIDS programme has provided information and education services for specific vulnerable target groups, and has built capacity among local government and civil society to provide basic care for people living with HIV/AIDS. Part of the £850,000 of support in 2005–06 to help municipal Government initiatives tackle poverty will benefit the autonomous regions on the coast. We have helped to increase visibility of the region's challenges, and its potential contribution to development, by supporting the participation of Afro-descendent youth in debates on marginalisation and the

dissemination of the United Nations development programme (UNDP)'s human development report for Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. DFID support to the 2005 census is contributing to the better identification of the poverty on the coast, thereby enabling more effective targeting of resources in the future. DFID has also begun discussions with the Presidential Commission for Competitiveness to explore how the bilateral programme can support market access for small enterprises and rural producers in the region.

DFID uses its position as a member of the influential group of donors providing budgetary support to challenge the economic and political marginalisation of the region, and seek opportunities to demonstrate its potential contribution to national development. Participation in this group also enables DFID to advocate increased spending on social sectors and employment generation in the national budget. My visit to Nicaragua last year enabled me to press specific issues of the Atlantic coast, such as land rights, when I met with President Bolanos.

Swaziland

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* multilateral and *(b)* bilateral aid has been given by the United Kingdom to Swaziland to tackle AIDS in each of the last 10 years. [17937]

Mr. Thomas: Since 2001 approximately £1.7million of DFID's contribution to the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and Malaria was spent in Swaziland. We also have a current commitment (2005 to 2007) of £4 million to UNICEF and the Joint United Programmes on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for regional HIV/Aids programmes that will benefit Swaziland. DFID is planning to spend an additional £3 million in Swaziland as part of a multi-country programme that will help to care and protect orphans and vulnerable children.

DFID has disbursed the following aid to Swaziland on HIV related projects, both bilaterally and regionally:

	Bilateral (£)	*Regional (£)*[1]	*Total (£)*
1996–97	112,516	—	112,516
1997–98	160,070	—	160,070
1998–99	109,598	—	109,598
1999–2000	115,578	—	115,578
2000–01	175,666	370,000	545,666
2001–02	54,184	370,000	424,184
2002–03	43,532	370,000	413,532
2003–04	11,432	370,000	381,432
2004–05	—	570,000	570,000

[1] Estimated amounts disbursed in Swaziland through regional programmes

Our records indicate that all funding was disbursed through NGO's, the UN system or otherwise through multilateral organisations.

United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females are employed by the United Nations Population Fund in the counties in China where they operate; and what their core duties are. [16638]

Mr. Thomas: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) does not employ staff to work at the sub-national level (county level) in China. The UNFPA staff in China are all employed in Beijing.

However, UNFPA's national staff do monitor in China. This includes regular visits to the counties where UNFPA support is provided, including household visits, and interviews with women's groups.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how employees of the United Nations Population Fund monitor the Chinese one child policy within the counties they operate in; and if he will make a statement. [16639]

Mr. Thomas: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) does not support or monitor the one child policy or its implementation.

The UNFPA works in China, to support the reform of family planning, in line with the principles of free and informed choice as set out at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994.

The UNFPA's monitoring in China includes regular visits by the UNFPA staff to the counties where the UNFPA support is provided, including household visits, and interviews with women's groups.

As a condition of UNFPA support the Chinese authorities have removed birth quotas and targets within the counties in which UNFPA provides support. The UNFPA programme in China is making a full range of reproductive health services available in 32 counties on a voluntary basis.

West Papua

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of illegal logging and mining activity in West Papua. [17239]

Mr. Thomas: The scale of illegal logging and mining in Papua has, until recently, been poorly understood. An official Government of Indonesia investigation team in 2003 was turned away by the Governor of Papua. February 2005, however, saw the publication of a damning report "The Last Frontier" by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and local NGO Telapak, supported by DFID. This resulted from several years of undercover investigations and reported that timber theft on a massive scale was taking place in Papua, to a value of $1 billion a year, mostly exported to feed the booming timber industries in China.

The report galvanised serious action from the Government of Indonesia, which sent a team of 1,500 people to investigate, but no high level convictions resulted. The investigation was closed after criticism in Parliament of its lack of focus, inability to reach powerful actors, and unfair scape-goating of poor rural communities. However, the Ministry of Forestry has now instigated a review of the timber licensing systems in Papua, which DFID is currently supporting.

There have been no systematic investigations into illegal mining in Papua. In 2001, the Indonesian environmental organization Walhi brought a successful

conviction against Freeport Mines for breaking environmental law and misinforming the public about its responsibility for the inadequate construction and subsequent breach of a dam below its mine site that was filled with toxic waste. The dam's breach resulted in many deaths. The conviction was later overturned on appeal.

DFID has been supporting the work of EIA/Telapak for a number of years, through our Forestry Programme (MFP) in Indonesia. The programme is also supporting the review of current forest management systems with the Ministry of Forestry, the Papua Provincial Forest Department, local NGOs and community groups. More widely in Papua, the programme is supporting rural communities to strengthen local institutions and map their traditional land claims in order for them to better negotiate with government and private businesses over future forest land uses.

DFID also supports a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding on Illegal Logging with the Government of Indonesia, which aims to tackle illegal logging in a variety of ways but has no activities specific to Papua. The Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, which DFID supports through the EU, foresees a voluntary partnership agreement with the Government of Indonesia that would restrict imports of illegal timber from Indonesia to the European Union member states.

DFID continues to support EIA/Telapak through a new grant to focus specifically on Papua, building the capacity of local NGOs to fulfil a stronger watchdog role over illegal logging activities.

DFID does not provide support to address the problems of illegal mining.

World Trade Talks

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* discussions he has had and *(b)* agreements have been reached between his Department and (i) the Department for Trade and Industry, (ii) the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and (iii) the EU Trade Commission in respect of objectives for desired outcomes from the World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong in December, with particular reference to less developed countries. [18727]

Mr. Thomas *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The UK's objectives for the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Hong Kong, and the current round of trade negotiations on the Doha development agenda (DDA), were set out to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and by the Prime Minister to the European Parliament, on 23 June this year, while announcing the wider objectives the Government have for our current presidency of the European Union.

They are to work with our EU partners, the Commission and the European Parliament to achieve the best possible outcome which leads to global economic growth, including through better access to markets for developing countries, in particular for the poorest nations in the world. We want an outcome which reflects the millennium development goals, and which allows the DDA to be completed during 2006.

It is the European Commission that negotiates in the WTO, as in every other international trade policy forum, on behalf of the EU member states. The European Commission is fully aware of the UK's objectives.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Experimentation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Department's policy is on the setting up of a Royal Commission into Animal Experimentation. [18218]

Andy Burnham: In the light of the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures, published in July 2002, the Government do not believe that there is a pressing need for a Royal Commission into the issue of animal experimentation at the present time. The Select Committee's exhaustive inquiry lasted for over a year and took oral and written evidence from over 100 organisations and individuals, including participants from the scientific community, industry, regulators and animal welfare and animal rights organisations.

The Select Committee also visited universities, pharmaceutical and contract testing companies and research laboratories in the United Kingdom, France and the United States. The Select Committee concluded that it is morally acceptable to use animals in scientific procedures, but that it is morally wrong to cause them unnecessary or avoidable suffering. It also concluded that there is at present a continuing need for animal experiments both in applied research and in research aimed purely at extending knowledge. The Government share these views as, we believe, do the great majority of people in the United Kingdom.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of *(a)* the assistance, with particular reference to interpretation facilities, available to asylum seekers making their initial application for asylum and *(b)* the impact of the absence of independent advisers from Home Office interviews. [19034]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Since 6 February this year the United Kingdom has implemented the ED Receptions Conditions Directive which lays down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers in member states including the requirement to provide all new asylum claimants with an information leaflet which advises them of their rights and responsibilities and provides contact numbers for support and assistance.

This leaflet is available in 15 languages which covers the majority (approximately 92 per cent.) of asylum seekers. Asylum Screening Units in both Liverpool and Croydon have a pool of interpreters available for

their immediate use, while ports of entry and other immigration offices will call in an interpreter to attend interviews, when required.

All interpreters used by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) either hold a recognised public qualification such as the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) Law option, or have been assessed by the Metropolitan Police or the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Interpreters are bound by a Code of Conduct and their performance is monitored by the IND officials.

(b) The assessment made when funding for advisers to attend interviews was withdrawn in April 2004 was that their presence added little value in most cases. Where the claimant is considered to need additional support, as in the case of minors and people whose claims are considered very quickly, funding continues. There is no evidence that the changes have worked to the disadvantage of asylum claimants. Claimants can also ask for an audio recording of their substantive interviews if they are not entitled to representation at interview or lack sufficient resources to pay for their own representation, but at present only around 20 per cent. do so.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applications from Somali nationals have *(a)* not yet been finally determined and *(b)* been refused in each of the last five years, broken down by year of the original application; and how many of those refused asylum seekers have been deported or voluntarily repatriated. [17956]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not readily available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Available information is published in the quarterly and annual asylum statistics copies of which are accessible from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for asylum made in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003, *(e)* 2004 and *(f)* 2005 by nationals of (i) Sierra Leone, (ii) Nigeria, (iii) Ghana, (iv) Uganda, (v) Zimbabwe, (vi) Ethiopia, (vii) Eritrea, (viii) Somalia, (ix) Moldova, (x) Afghanistan, (xi) Iraq, (xii) Iran, (xiii) Turkey, (xiv) Ecuador and (xv) Colombia have been successful; how many were accepted by the Home Office before tribunal proceedings; how many were successful as a result (A) of a decision of an adjudicator, (B) of a decision of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal and (C) of a final decision by the Home Secretary; and what percentage of the total each category represents. [19242]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate costs by examination of individual case records. Information on asylum applications, grants of asylum at initial decision and appeal outcomes by nationality is published quarterly and annually. Copies are available from the Library on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for asylum have been made in each year since 2001. [19562]

Mr. McNulty: Information on asylum applications is published quarterly and annually. The information requested is published in the annual bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2004. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers in Gravesham are awaiting the result of *(a)* an initial decision and *(b)* an appeal. [20080]

Mr. McNulty: Asylum seekers apply to be granted refugee status in the UK rather than specifically in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Information on asylum seekers' initial decisions and subsequent appeals within particular areas of the UK is not available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. The numbers of asylum seekers supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are published on a quarterly and annual basis, broken down by local authority.

The next publication covering the third quarter of 2005 (July to September) will be available on 22 November 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on asylum seekers supported by NASS broken down by parliamentary constituency are also available from the Library of the House

British Citizenship

Ian Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for naturalisation as a British citizen since 2001 have been processed within *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months, *(c)* two years and *(d)* three years; and how many are outstanding after three years. [14362]

Mr. McNulty: Information is only available from April 2002. The number of cases decided within the specified timescales is as follows:

During 2004–05, 53 per cent. of new applications were decided within three months of receipt, 75 per cent. within six months and 97 per cent. within 12 months.

580 applications are outstanding after three years.

	Decided within:			
	Six months	*12 months*	*24 months*	*36 months*
2002–03	69,331	52,530	18,005	634
2003–04	97,921	26,935	15,403	142
2004–05	115,836	22,303	1,288	0

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will to reply to the letter to him dated 7 September from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. Kenroy Brown. [19512]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton on 20 October 2005.

EU Accession Country Migrants

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many citizens from East European member states of the EU resident in the UK have registered with the workers registration scheme, broken down by *(a)* occupation and *(b)* nationality. [16852]

Mr. McNulty: The Accession Monitoring Report for May 2004—June 2005 sets out the number of citizens from East European member states of the European Union (EU) who have registered with the worker registration scheme during this period. This report is available on the Home Office website via:http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the economic impact of the settlement of economic migrants from European Union accession countries in the UK since 1 May 2004, with particular reference to local public services; and if he will make a statement. [18210]

Mr. McNulty: On 1 May 2004 the Government set up the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to regulate accession eight nationals' access to the labour market and to restrict access to benefits.

The Government committed to publish data from the Worker Registration Scheme on a quarterly basis. The latest quarterly statistics for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2005 were published on 23 August 2005. The report includes the number of people registering on the WRS and the number of accession nationals that apply for benefits.

A copy of the report is available on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate website http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have come to the United Kingdom from the new EU accession states under the Worker Registration Scheme; and what estimate he has made of their financial contribution to the UK. [18748]

Mr. McNulty: On 1 May 2004 the Government set up the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to regulate Accession eight nationals' access to the labour market and to restrict access to benefits.

The Government committed to publish data from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) on a quarterly basis. The latest quarterly statistics for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2005 were published on 23 August 2005. The report gives the number of people registering on the WRS but we currently provide no estimate of the financial contribution of A8 migrants under the WRS.

A copy of the report is available on the Immigration and Nationality Directorate website:

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

Human Trafficking

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his strategy for *(a)* combating trafficking in human beings and *(b)* caring for victims of trafficking. [330]

Paul Goggins: The Government have a comprehensive strategy to tackle trafficking which encompasses legislation, law enforcement, prevention, international co-operation and the support of victims. Trafficking is a priority for our presidencies of the EU and G8. The Government provide £20 million of funding annually to Reflex, the multi-agency task force which co-ordinates the law enforcement response to organised immigration crime. Reflex has resulted in a number of successful prosecutions of traffickers.

In March 2003 a small-scale Home Office-funded pilot Scheme was launched in London in partnership with Eaves Housing for Women to provide safe accommodation and one-to-one support for adult female victims trafficked into the UK for prostitution. An evaluation of the Scheme has just been completed and published. Overall this was positive about the model of support provided by the Scheme and funding has been extended until March 2006. We are now considering the future provision of support in light of the evaluation findings.

Identity Cards

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to make financial concessions on the cost of identity cards for *(a)* people on low income, *(b)* young people and students and *(c)* the elderly; and if he will make a statement. [17488]

Mr. McNulty: Clause 37 of the Identity Cards Bill provides for maximum flexibility in setting reduced fees for any group including those listed in the question. No decisions have been made on the details of any concessionary fee regime which will need to be informed by the outcome of the procurement stage. The Bill was amended in Committee to ensure that the first fee schedule for the scheme will be debated in Parliament.

As to the cost of ID cards more generally, our current best estimate of the average unit cost of getting a combined passport and ID card package valid for 10 years is £93. Around 70 per cent. of these costs would be incurred anyway because of the world-wide move to biometric passports.

However some people may choose to obtain a stand-alone ID card. It will be affordable to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a standalone ID card which is valid for 10 years. This will be affordable within current Home Office spending plans.

Illegal Migrants

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal migrants including dependants he estimates are resident in London. [19163]

Mr. McNulty: As in other countries, the number of "unauthorised" or "illegal" migrants—including failed asylum seekers—in the UK is unknown. A report by the Migration Research Unit (MRU) of University College London on "Sizing the Illegally Resident Population in the UK" was published last year. It reviewed the methods used by researchers and Government agencies in other countries and assessed their viability for use in the UK.

That report suggested that a method which could be applied in the UK is the "residual method" used in the United States. The new report details how that method has been applied in the UK. It was published by the Home Office on 30 June. A copy of the RDS on-line report 29/05—"Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001" can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html.

The central estimate of the illegally resident population is 430,000. This is not broken down geographically. It must be emphasised that, while this method is one that can be used with data available for the UK, over-reliance must not be placed on this result in the absence of the means to produce other estimates using different methods.

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants have been found *(a)* within the UK and *(b)* in London in each year since 1992. [19161]

Mr. McNulty: The number of persons who have had enforcement action initiated against them as illegal entrants in each year since 1992 is given in the table. People who have had enforcement action initiated against them may then be removed from the country.

There may be some barriers to removal including judicial or human rights applications; lack of documentation (without which an applicant cannot be returned); absence of a travel route; lack of co-operation from receiving countries or scheduled flight services (resulting in lengthy documentation processes or use of charter flights).

Alternatively, some people may decide to leave voluntarily, after enforcement action has been initiated against them and others may chose to leave via Assisted Voluntary Returns programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration. Information on the number of illegal immigrants that have been found in London is not available.

Persons subject to illegal entry enforcement action[1], 1992 to 2004, United Kingdom

	Persons against whom enforcement action was initiated[2,3]
1992	5,670
1993	5,780
1994	7,540
1995	10,820
1996	14,560
1997	14,390
1998	16,500
1999	21,165
2000	47,325
2001	69,875
2002	48,050
2003	—
2004[4,5,6]	36,550

[1] Under sections 3(6), 3(7) or 33(1) of the Immigration Act 1971, or under section 10 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five.
[3] Illegal entrants detected and persons issued with a notice of intention to deport, recommended for deportation by a court or proceeded against under Section 10.
[4] 2004 figures include dependants of asylum seekers.
[5] Figures for 2004 include nationals of the 10 EU accession countries.
[6] Provisional.

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many successful prosecutions have been brought against employers for hiring illegal immigrants in each year since 1992. [19162]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the number of persons found guilty under section eight of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1996 for employing illegal immigrants is published annually in the Control of Immigration Command Paper. Section eight of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 first introduced the offence of employing illegal migrant workers and it came into force on 27 January 1997.

No figures are therefore available for the years prior to this date. The published statistics are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Immigrant Labour

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the net contributions of immigrant workers to the UK economy in the latest year for which figures are available. [18749]

Mr. McNulty: In 2002 the Home Office published research into the net fiscal contribution of migrants. This was based on figures for 1999–2000 and estimated that migrants made a net fiscal contribution of £2.5 billion. This research was recently updated by IPPR based on figures for 2003–04 (Sriskandarajah, Cooley and Reed: Paying their way: the fiscal contribution of immigrants in the UK, IPPR, London, 2005). This found that migrants made a relatively greater fiscal contribution than UK born residents.

Immigration

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission research on whether the integration of refugees is affected by the grant of limited rather than indefinite leave to remain. [18983]

Mr. McNulty: No. We have a comprehensive strategy for the integration of migrants including refugees Integration Matters, published this year, which takes

account of this change, and we will be carrying out a survey as part of that strategy which will provide information on a range of factors which affect the integration of refugees.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many working hours have been lost at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate due to the loss of computer access in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [17004]

Mr. McNulty: Information about loss of computer access can only be provided from 1 January 2005 since prior to this date, the contractual performance measures did not support the provision of this information.

From 1 January 2005 to 10 October 2005 (comprising 6,720 working hours), 113 IT service hours have been lost to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate resulting from four major incidents, highlighted in the table.

From		*To*		*Duration*	
Date	*Time*	*Date*	*Time*	*Service hours*	*Reason*
22 April 2005	09.30	22 April 2005	13.00	3.5	Power Outage
19 July 2005	07.35	19 July 2005	21.50	14.5	Air conditioning failure
14 June 2005	16.00	18 June 2005	09.00	89.0	Data synchronisation error
26 September 2005	15.12	26 September 2005	21.00	6.0	Data switch failure
			Total	113.0	

Mobile Telephones (Driving Offences)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many fixed penalty notices have been issued in England and Wales for offences involving using hand-held mobile telephones when driving a motor vehicle; [17960]

(2) how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for offences while driving a motor vehicle and using a hand-held mobile telephone in the South Wales Police Force area. [17973]

Paul Goggins: The new offence of driving whilst using a hand-held mobile telephone was introduced from 1 December 2003. In the first month of the new offence, within England and Wales, 1,888 fixed penalty notices were issued for the offence. These are the latest available figures. None were issued by South Wales police. 2004 data will be available in early 2006.

Passports

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the identification requirements are for a UK passport photograph of a person who is wearing a burka or other face-covering apparel. [19048]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 13 October 2005]:* All passport photographs must show the passport holder's full face. Headwear worn for religious reasons is permitted, provided the full face can still be seen and there are no shadows on the face.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the photographic identification requirements for identity cards in the Identity Cards Bill are to be the same as those currently used for UK passport applications. [19049]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The photograph used on identity cards will, like the photographs used for passports, need to comply with International Civil Aviation Organisation recommendations for Machine-Readable Travel Documents. It may also need to comply with other requirements (resolution, etc.) for the purposes of being usable by the facial recognition technology eventually chosen by the scheme.

Whereas photographs currently used for passports are supplied by the applicant, the photograph used for the Identity Card will be taken at a meeting at one of the enrolment centres operated by the scheme.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time was between receipt of a request for the return of documents by the Home Office Passport Unit and the issuing of a loss of passport letter in *(a)* 1997–98, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03, *(d)* 2003–04, *(e)* 2004–05 and *(f)* 2005 to date; and if he will make a statement. [18970]

Andy Burnham: Information on the average time between receipt of a request for the return of documents by the Home Office Passport Unit and the issuing of a loss of passport letter would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Refugees

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the human rights records of the top 10 refugee producing countries in 2004. [18751]

Mr. McNulty: Home Office Country of Origin Information Service produces Country of Origin Information Reports on the 20 countries that generate the most asylum applications to the UK. These documents focus on human rights issues and are compiled from material produced by external information sources including the US State Department, UNHCR, human rights organisations and news media. The reports are not 'assessments' but brief summaries of the original source material and do not contain any Home Office policy or opinion. They are published on the Home Office website twice yearly, at the end of April and October. Bulletins are issued in between editions of the reports where updates on significant events are required.

Home Office Asylum and Appeals Policy Directorate produces Operational Guidance Notes on the top 20 countries generating asylum applicants and other countries where there is an operational need. These documents provide a brief summary of the general, political and human rights situation in the country and details of common types of claims. They aim to provide clear guidance for caseworkers on whether the main

types of claim are likely to justify the grant of asylum, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary leave. Operational Guidance Notes are also published on the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk .

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the Youth Justice Board's report on the use of restraint in secure training centres. [12128]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 604W.

Skills Advisory Body

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he expects the reports of the Skills Advisory Body to be published in full; [18753]

(2) what the proposed terms of reference of the Skills Advisory Body are. [18754]

Mr. McNulty: No decision has yet been taken on the terms of reference or the nature of the output of the proposed Skills Advisory Body. This is currently out for consultation along with the other proposals for a points based system for managed migration. The consultation closes on 7 November.

Visas

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visas for temporary stays in the United Kingdom have been issued in each year since 2000. [18235]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The information on visas issued for non-settlement in the United Kingdom in each year since 2000, is as follows:

	Non-settlement visas issued
2000[1]	1,430,574
2001–02[2]	1,495,472
2002–03[2]	1,592,421
2003–04[2]	1,766,170

[1] This figure represents visas issued in the calendar year.
[2] These figures represent visas issued in the financial year.

The statistics provided for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 are publicly available on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk—"Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures". UKvisas is the department responsible for entry clearance overseas. Figures for April 2004 to March 2005 are due to be published on the website shortly.

Work Permits

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in each of the last five years to individuals working in *(a)* health care and *(b)* social care. [18593]

Mr. McNulty: Figures for individuals working in social care are not identified separately. However work permits issued for the Health Care Industry include social care approvals. The numbers of work permits issued in each of the last five years for these sectors are as follows:

	Work permits issued
2000	19,961
2001	30,576
2002	38,456
2003	44,443
2004	48,493

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many non-European Economic Area foreign nationals were granted permits in 2004 to work in the United Kingdom. [18757]

Mr. McNulty: Work permit approvals in 2004 totalled 156,275.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what proportion of jobs for successful applicants under the Worker Registration Scheme covering the new EU accession states have been in *(a)* hospitality and catering, *(b)* administration, business and management, *(c)* agriculture, *(d)* manufacturing, *(e)* food processing and *(f)* other; [18758]

(2) what the age profile is of the successful applicants under the worker registration scheme covering the new EU accession states; [18759]

(3) what proportion of successful applicants under the worker registration scheme covering the new EU accession states have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted state benefits. [18760]

Mr. McNulty: On 1 May 2004 the Government set up the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to regulate Accession eight nationals' access to the labour market and to restrict access to benefits.

The Government committed to publish data from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) on a quarterly basis. The latest quarterly statistics for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2005 were published on 23 August 2005. The report gives details of the employment sectors in which Accession eight nationals are registered, the age profile of the applicants and access to benefits by Accession nationals.

A copy of the report is available on the IND website:

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the future of the seasonal agricultural workers scheme. [18762]

Mr. McNulty: On 19 July 2005 the Home Secretary published a consultation document on a new system for managed migration: Introducing a new (points-based) system for managed migration to the UK. The purpose of the document is to explain the proposals, including the Government's thinking on the development of schemes for the admission of low-skilled workers from outside the EEA, and seek the views of our customers and stakeholders.

The future of the seasonal agricultural workers scheme (SAWS) is being considered as part of this consultation. Officials met with representatives from the agricultural sector on 6 October to discuss the options for future low-skilled migration routes for the agricultural sector.

TREASURY

Academies (Tax Relief)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* tax, *(b)* VAT and *(c)* other excise duty reliefs and exemptions apply to (i) city academies, (ii) foundation schools and (iii) the sponsors of city academies for the cost of their sponsorship and related expenses. [21075]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: City academies and foundation schools benefit from the full range of VAT and direct tax reliefs available to charities. They are exempt from tax on most income and capital gains when these are applied to charitable purposes, and benefit from a range of VAT reliefs. These VAT reliefs include a zero rate for construction of buildings, or parts of buildings, where at least 90 per cent. of total use will be solely for a relevant charitable purpose, such as the provision of core education. City academies and foundation schools also qualify for a reduced VAT rate of 5 per cent. when they purchase fuel and power for use in the course of their charitable non-business activities.

Academies and foundation schools can reclaim any VAT they have incurred that relates to taxable activities, such as extended use of school facilities for which a taxable charge is made. They can also choose to reclaim from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) any VAT costs relating to non-business use of buildings, and to account for output tax on this non-business use over a twenty year period. In addition, local education authorities can reclaim from HMRC any VAT costs they have incurred in relation to foundation schools, or any VAT costs incurred by the foundation school when making purchases as an agent of the local education authority.

VAT is not chargeable on the sponsorship contribution made by academy sponsors. Where an academy sponsor makes the payment wholly and exclusively for the purposes of their trade and does not acquire any capital asset in return, the expenditure is allowable for tax purposes. Alternatively, if the sponsor is itself an educational charity the sponsorship payment would be treated as qualifying charitable expenditure and the income from which the sponsorship payment is made is potentially exempt from tax.

There are no special excise duty reliefs or exemptions available to academies, foundation schools or academy sponsors.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been allocated to publicising the Child Trust Fund for the periods *(a)* January to 31 December 2004, *(b)* January 2005 to 30 June 2005, *(c)* 30 June 2005 to 30 September 2005 and *(d)* 30 September 2005 to 31 December 2005, broken down by (i) radio, (ii) television and (iii) newspaper advertising; and if he will make a statement. [19589]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The objectives of the Child Trust Fund advertising campaign are:

to ensure that parents are aware of the Child Trust Fund;

to ensure that parents understand what they need to do to open an account and where they can go for more information; and

to encourage parents to open an account for their child.

As at 20 August 2005, 1,927,000 vouchers had been issued and 889,000 accounts had been opened.

Total media spend on advertising during the periods listed above was as follows (these figures include any related media buying fees, but exclude VAT):

£

Period	*Radio*	*Television*	*Newspaper*	*Total*
1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004	0	0	0	0
1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005	340,000	1.48 million	800,000	2.62 million
30 June 2005 to 30 September 2005	210,000	970,000	99,000	1.28 million
30 September 2005 to 31 December 2005[1]	0	960,000	250,000	1.2 million

[1] Figures for 30 September 2005 to 31 December 2005 are approximate, as final costs will not be known until after the current burst of advertising has finished.

Compensation Payments

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what payments for compensation for *(a)* discrimination and *(b)* unfair dismissal have been made by his Department and its agencies over the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [20010]

John Healey: Over the last three years the Chancellor's Department and its agencies have made payments for *(a)* discrimination of £153,700 in total and *(b)* unfair dismissal of £88,168 in total.

Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the annual amount received from corporation tax in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21180]

John Healey: The information is not available to estimate the annual amount received from corporation tax in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

Financial Services Authority

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the Financial Services Authority; and if he will make a statement. [20027]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The two-year review of the Financial Services and Market Act 2000 was completed in December of last year. Following this review, the FSA has been working to refine further its cost-benefit analysis methodology and the implementation of it.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding *(a)* expenditure on human resources and *(b)* senior staff pay and bonuses at the Financial Services Authority during the last 10 years. [20034]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) is operationally independent of Government. Expenditure on human resources, senior staff pay and bonuses are matters for the FSA Board. It is worth highlighting that the FSA consults on its business plan and the proposed level of fees each year.

The FSA Annual Report for 2004–05 provides details of the FSA's reward system.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received regarding malpractice at the Financial Services Authority; and if he will make a statement. [20035]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The FSA is one of the public bodies cited in a statement of complaint received from the Parliamentary Ombudsman which alleges maladministration in respect of the prudential regulation of Equitable Life. The allegation covers the period prior to December 2001; from January 1999 to that date the FSA carried out the prudential regulation of Equitable Life under contracting-out arrangements. The investigation of this complaint is continuing. A statement of complaint against the FSA only for this period has previously been investigated by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, who found there had been no maladministration.

Otherwise I am not aware of other representations regarding malpractice at the Financial Services Authority.

Fuel Oil Duty

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue the Government received from the duty levied on fuel oil in the financial years *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; what revenue his Department estimates it will receive in the financial year 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [21090]

Dawn Primarolo: Annual excise duty receipts for fuel oil are included in Table 3 of the HM Revenue and Customs statistical Bulletin for Hydrocarbon Oils, which can be found on a HM Revenue and Customs website address at:

http: //www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/index.cfm?task = bullhydro

Information on monthly receipts collected to September 2005 is available in the same table.

The estimated excise duty receipts for hydrocarbon oils in the financial year 2005–06 were published in the Budget 2005 Financial Statement and Budget Report, Table C8.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much VAT the Treasury collected from the sale of fuel oil in the financial years *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; what revenue his Department estimates it will receive in the financial year 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [21091]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not collect data on VAT for individual goods or services.

Game Rearing Farms

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 292W, on game rearing farms, what estimate he has made of the amount of revenue which is lost because game farms are not accurately registered for non-domestic rates. [21103]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA), whose valuation officers are responsible for maintaining non-domestic rating lists, do not hold any statistics relating to the loss of revenue due to any game farms not being identified and entered into the relevant lists. The VOA believes that any significant game farms have already been identified either by the Agency, billing authorities (who are responsible for notifying the Agency) or via inquiries by animal rights organisations or the Game Farmers Association. In general, game farm assessments produce relatively low rateable values. This is because the average operation is on a relatively small scale, the area of land utilised for the actual operations is often no more than a field or part of a field, often this is transient (which may mean the operation is not treated as rateable due to the de minimis provisions relating to the exemption of agricultural land) and any rateable buildings are poorly located, minimal and of agricultural quality.

The VOA has undertaken various initiatives over recent years to identify commercial game farms and to enter them in the non-domestic rating lists. Where the valuation officer is aware of a property that may be operating as a commercial game farm and it is not assessed for non-domestic rates, then the circumstances will be investigated by the valuation officer and action will be taken to assess the game farm, if appropriate.

Hospital Births

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many births to women resident in *(a)* Fareham, *(b)* Gosport, *(c)* Portsmouth and *(d)* Havant local authority areas took place in (i) Blackbrook maternity unit, (ii) the Mary Rose Unit, St Mary's hospital Portsmouth, (iii) other Portsmouth hospitals NHS trust, (iv) other NHS hospitals, (v) at home and (vi) elsewhere in (A) 2003 and (B) 2004. [20373]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Mark Hoban, dated 24 October 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your parliamentary question concerning the number of births to women resident in *(a)* Fareham, *(b)* Gosport, *(c)* Portsmouth

and *(d)* Havant local authority areas took place in (i) Blackbrook maternity unit, (ii) the Mary Rose unit, St Mary's hospital Portsmouth, (iii) other Portsmouth hospitals NHS trust, (iv) other NHS hospitals, (v) at home and (vi) elsewhere in (A) 2003 and (B) 2004. (20373)

The latest period for which data are available is 2003. A table is provided . The statistics relate to maternities, whether leading to a live-birth, a still-birth, or a multiple birth. (A multiple birth counts as one maternity and maternities before 24 weeks gestation are not registered.)

Maternities to residents of Portsmouth UA; Fareham CD, Gosport CD and Havant CD by place of occurrence 2003

	Mother's local authority of residence			
	Portsmouth	*Fareham*	*Gosport*	*Havant*
(i) Blackbrook Maternity unit	[1]	112	[1]	[1]
(ii) Mary Rose unit, Portsmouth	2,100	632	613	1,001
(iii) Other Portsmouth NHS trusts	[1]	[1]	212	[1]
(iv) Other NHS hospitals	44	273	24	194
(v) At home	47	20	22	22
(vi) Elsewhere	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Total	2,196	1,051	876	1,221

[1] Cells with fewer than 5 maternities are suppressed for disclosure reasons. It has also been necessary to apply further suppression to avoid disclosure by differencing from the total.

Ministerial Correspondence

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether *(a)* he or *(b)* any other Minister in his Department uses (i) an automated signing machine and (ii) a stamp for ministerial correspondence purposes. [19859]

John Healey: Guidance on handling ministerial correspondence is set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments' copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. Treasury Ministers do not use automated signing machines or signature stamps for ministerial correspondence.

Mortgage Products

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next plans to review the range of mortgage products on the market. [19973]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK benefits from a diverse and competitive mortgage market, which offers consumers a wide choice of products. FSA and HM Treasury officials maintain ongoing contact with market participants in order to keep abreast of product innovations.

At present there are no plans for a formal review of the range of mortgage products available.

Pensions

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will break down the tax relief given on approved pension scheme contributions in 2004–05 by decile of the pre-tax income distribution; [20936]

(2) how much of the tax relief given on approved pension scheme contributions in 2004–05 was given to taxpayers with a taxable income of more than £100,000 a year; [20938]

(3) how much of the tax relief given on account of approved pension scheme contributions in 2004–05 was given to *(a)* taxpayers paying the 40 pence higher rate of income tax and *(b)* taxpayers who would have been paying the 40 pence higher rate of income tax were it not for this relief. [20951]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of the cost of tax relief on contributions to approved pension schemes are published on the HMRC website: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/7_9_sep05.pdf.

It is not possible to break these estimates down by decile or taxable income bands. However, for relief on individual and employee contributions, a broad estimate of the proportion of relief split between higher rate payers, those that would be higher rate in the absence of the relief, and others is given as follows.

Percentage of tax relief on individual and employee pension contributions

Marginal income tax rate	*Percentage of tax relief*
Higher rate	55
Those that would be higher rate without the tax relief	5
Others	40

This distribution is based on the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes projected to 2004–05. It is not possible to provide such a breakdown for employer contributions.

Pre-owned Asset Regulations

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Written Statement of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 111WS, on pre-owned asset regulations (double charges), when he plans to publish the regulations. [19426]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs are currently finalising the regulations.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from his Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20134]

John Healey: The information is not available.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will produce an annual estimate of the unfunded liabilities of public sector pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [20660]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 306W.

Public Service Agreements

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with Health Ministers on the operation of their public service agreements; and if he will make a statement. [20596]

Mr. Des Browne: The Chancellor holds regular discussions with Health Ministers on a range of policy matters.

Regional Economic Performance

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will establish a system of six-monthly published reports on regional economic performance including productivity, wage levels, investment influences, employment levels and public spending per capita. [20508]

John Healey: The Government publish progress against their regional economic performance PSA target every six months in the Departmental Reports and Autumn Performance Reports for HM Treasury, DTI and ODPM. The most recent progress report is provided in HM Treasury: Departmental Report, June 2005 (Cm. 6540).

Total identifiable public expenditure on services by region per capita is provided on an annual basis by the ONS. The most recent data is set out in table 8.2 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2005 (Cm 6521).

Regional Pay Variations

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what monitoring he undertakes of *(a)* local and regional variations in pay and *(b)* the account taken of extra costs for retention and recruitment that arise in the South East and London in public sector pay (i) remits and (ii) settlements. [19839]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government monitors many aspects of public sector pay and is working with Departments to encourage and promote greater emphasis of regional and local issues when setting pay.

Where individual Departments and agencies are facing localised recruitment and retention problems for their staff or the work force groups that they represent, their proposals for addressing these are scrutinised on a case-by-case in their individual pay remits by the Treasury (in the case of pay remits) and the independent Pay Review Bodies (in the case of certain other work force groups in the public sector).

The Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation carried out by Sir Michael Lyons in 2004 highlighted the extra costs associated with employing staff in London and the South East and the financial savings that will result over the medium term from the relocation of 20,000 posts. The Government is on course to meet this target.

Revenue and Customs

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the progress of the merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. [20722]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for East Devon (Mr. Swire) on 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 551W.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been recruited to work within Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21221]

Dawn Primarolo: In the last five financial years, the total number of recruits (including both permanent and non-permanent staff) to HM Revenue and Customs in Northern Ireland was:

	Headcount
2000–01	225
2001–02	174
2002–03	260
2003–04	267
2004–05	197

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by HM Revenue and Customs in Northern Ireland, broken down by grade; and how many of those staff are currently investigating *(a)* fuel smuggling and *(b)* other illegal activities by republican and loyalist paramilitaries. [20780]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of staff (full-time equivalents) employed by HM Revenue and Customs in Northern Ireland as at 1 April 2005, broken down by grade, was as set out in the following table.

Grade	*Number*[1]
SCS	2
Grade 6	15
Grade 7	36
Fast Stream	1
SEO	91
HEO	290
EO	714
AO	1,001
AA	372
Total	2,522

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest whole number

It is not our policy to disclose the details of the location and numbers of staff engaged in tackling serious and organised criminality, as to do so could provide assistance to those engaged in criminal activity. In addition, to do so would misrepresent the nature of criminal investigation activity, where staff are often tasked to act on a national basis.

Spectrum Tax

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the likely level of the proposed spectrum tax; and if he will make a statement; [20331]

(2) how much he expects to be raised in spectrum tax from the BBC over the period of the next Charter; and if he will make a statement. [20332]

John Healey: There are no proposals to introduce a spectrum tax. Ofcom, the independent regulator for the UK communications industries, is responsible for spectrum management, including the use of pricing to achieve its duty to ensure optimal use of spectrum.

Tax Credits

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will cease to pursue low income households for the repayment of overpaid tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [18553]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC's approach to handling overpayments is set out in Code of Practice 26: "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" It explains that, for claimants receiving the maximum award of child or working tax credit, there is a limit of 10 per cent. on the amount by which HMRC will reduce tax credits payments to recover overpaid tax credits from a previous year.

CoP26 is published on the HMRC website and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a more recent draft of the tax credit award notice than the draft under review as at 10 June. [18879]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* HMRC have been working on some further changes. An updated draft of the tax credits award notice will be placed in the Library when available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the tax credit entitlement of a family on a total income of £12,000 per annum with two children will be the same whether there are one or two adults in the family; and if he will make a statement. [19740]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credit entitlement of a family on a total income of £12,000 will be the same whether there are one or two adults.

The Government believe that all children should have the chance to fulfil their potential, regardless of circumstances.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the number of tax credit overpayments in 2004–05; what their total value is; and if he will make a statement. [19746]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for St. Albans (Anne Main) on the 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, Column 428.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the City of Edinburgh local authority area are in receipt of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit. [19749]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 321W.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Kent have benefited financially from the tax credit system in 2005. [20003]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 321W.

VAT (Sun Beds)

Mrs. James: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether VAT is levied on charges by sun bed tanning retail outlets. [20815]

Dawn Primarolo: The supply of the use of sun beds and tanning equipment by sun bed tanning retail outlets is VAT standard-rated. Businesses whose taxable turnover exceeds the current VAT registration threshold of £60,000 per annum must therefore account for VAT on their supplies of such services.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17884]

John Healey: HM Treasury has operated a range of employee volunteering initiatives and schemes for a number of years, and many teams and directorates volunteer on a regular basis. Mechanisms are being introduced to monitor the overall level of volunteering in the Treasury but information on the exact number of volunteering positions could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

One example of volunteering this year is the Department's participation in the National Mentoring Consortium Scheme http://www.uel.ac.uk/nmc/ that provides mentors for ethnic minority undergraduate students. To date eight Treasury employees have volunteered to become mentors in this scheme.

The Government announced additional investment for volunteering in Budget 2004, for 2005 as the Year of the Volunteer. In this context this year, the Treasury has developed its volunteering strategy. In particular, in addition to one day's volunteering leave, staff can now trade unused days with colleagues up to a maximum of five days per staff member per year.

Working Hours

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were working *(a)* fewer than 16 hours per week, *(b)* more than 16 hours per week and *(c)* more than 30 hours per week in each year since 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [20022]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Laws, dated 24 October 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the number hours worked per week. (20022)

The attached table provides the available information on usual weekly hours worked for the categories requested, covering the three month periods ending in August of the years 1996–2005.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

All persons in employment by usual weekly hours of work[1]: United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted

Thousands

Three months ending August	*All in employment*	*Less than 16 hours*	*16 up to 30 hours*	*31 hours and over*
1996	26,064	2,682	3,908	19,474
1997	26,512	2,649	4,052	19,811
1998	26,829	2,589	4,184	20,055
1999	27,162	2,610	4,295	20,257
2000	27,557	2,624	4,443	20,491
2001	27,714	2,411	4,590	20,714
2002	27,921	2,499	4,727	20,695
2003	28,186	2,576	4,816	20,793
2004	28,414	2,463	5,014	20,937
2005	28,759	2,424	5,089	21,246

[1] Main job only.

Note:
Due to rounding, some figures may not add up.

Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Child Poverty

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the percentage of children living in households with income at or below £13,910 in *(a)* Waltham Forest, *(b)* Redbridge, *(c)* London and *(d)* England. [18958]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

Information on income is not available below regional level. The available information is in the table.

Households with children by total annual household income

Total annual household income	*Percentage of households* *London*	*England*
At or below £13,910	21	16
Above £13,910	79	84

Note:
Percentages are rounded to the nearest percent.

Source:
DWP, Family Resources Survey 2003–04

Compulsory Redundancies

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* compulsory redundancies there have been in his Department (i) in 2005 and (ii) in each of the last five years. [17101]

Alan Johnson: The number of staff who left DTI headquarters directorates (including SBS and UKTI) on the grounds of redundancy on either voluntary early retirement or early severance terms in the years 2000 to 2005 are as follows:

(a) Voluntary redundancy

		Number
(i)	2005	0
(ii)	2004	10
—	2003	5
—	2002	2
—	2001	1
—	2000	0

(b) Compulsory redundancy

		Number
(i)	2005	0
(ii)	2004	7
—	2003	3
—	2002	0
—	2001	5
—	2000	0

Departmental Underspend

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the latest estimate is of underspend by his Department *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of departmental budget for financial year 2004–05. [18461]

Alan Johnson: As published in the Public Expenditure Provisional Outturn White Paper for 2004–05, my Department's underspend against the budget within departmental expenditure limits (DEL) amounted to a total of £457 million. The variance was mainly due to a lower than expected funding requirement in respect of the regional development agencies.

The underspend as a percentage of the departmental DEL budget amounted to 7 per cent.

Energywatch

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made by Energywatch in giving advice to smaller companies and public sector organisations on using flexible purchasing policies; and if he will make a statement. [19495]

Malcolm Wicks: Energywatch's Business Team provides advice to small and medium enterprise [SME] customers to enable them to get the most out of the energy market. The team has identified a number of problems faced by these customers, and additional information on the issues will be available from Energywatch's website www.energywatch.org.uk in November. Among other things, the additional information would include advice on how SMEs can access offers from energy suppliers, and understand the contract environment.

Energywatch is, in conjunction with DTI, sponsoring an event on 30 November to help SME and public sector consumers develop effective energy procurement strategies in the present climate of rising gas and electricity prices.

Export Controls

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies in the UK have an export licence for the export of arms to Israel. [19542]

Mr. Sutcliffe: 72 companies in the UK currently hold individual export licences authorising the export of Military List items to Israel.

Films (Conditional Bookings)

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning the effect of repeal of the Films (Alignments) Order 1989 on conditional bookings; and if he will make a statement. [20323]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have received representations from ministerial colleagues at DCMS, the UK Film Council and the Cinema Exhibitors' Association regarding the proposed revocation of the Films (Exclusivity Agreements) Order 1989.

Some concerns have been raised that the revocation of the order will see a return to the practice of film bundling. However, the order does not and was never intended to prohibit this particular practice. Such agreements between film distributors and cinema chains may fall within the remit of the Chapter I prohibition of the Competition Act 1998 and/or Article 81 of the EC Treaty. It would be for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to decide whether any action was appropriate.

Therefore I intend to accept the advice of the chairman of the OFT and proceed with the revocation.

Ministerial Visits (Nuclear Installations)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give *(a)* the date and *(b)* the location of ministerial visits to nuclear installations that (i) have taken place in the past six months and (ii) are planned for the next three months. [16955]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* I visited Sellafield on 25 July. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Competitiveness visited Sellafield on 5 September, and Dounreay on 19 September. No other visits to nuclear installations have been undertaken by Ministers of this Department in the past six months, and none are planned for the next three months.

National Grid

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the capacity of the national grid to accommodate new wind turbines; what that capacity is; and at what percentage of that capacity the grid is operating. [19735]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI and Carbon Trust Renewables Network Impacts Study (April 2004) stated that there are no major technical barriers to connecting expected rising levels of new wind turbines to the national grid by 2010 (7.6 per cent. by system demand) and 2020 (14.2 per cent. by system demand).

The report also concludes that the costs associated with intermittency to achieve the 2010 target are modest. These costs would fall to the wind power generator. The costs are more significant for the 2020 aspiration due to the amount of reserve the system needs to carry. Intermittency has to be managed but surplus capacity is always maintained in case of plant failure for all technology.

In 2004 RO eligible renewable generation accounted for 3.1 per cent. of capacity connected to the national grid.

North Sea Energy Industry

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's projection of UK continental shelf oil and gas production as measured in billion barrels of oil equivalent is up to the year 2030. [16417]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI does not project production as far ahead as 2030. The Department's latest published UK continental shelf (UKCS) production projections (at http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/chapters/Section4_17.htm) extend to only 2010. However, DTI does publish annually (at http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/chapters/reserves_index.htm) estimates of recoverable UKCS oil and gas reserves. These identify reserves remaining in existing discoveries, classified according to the probability of their development, and estimates of resources in as-yet-undiscovered fields. As at the start of 2005, perhaps 22 to 28 billion barrels of oil equivalent were expected to remain. How much of that oil and gas will be produced will depend on future activity levels, which are uncertain, but it seems likely that the large majority of the UK's hydrocarbon resources will have been extracted by 2030.

North-East Development Agency

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the work of the north-east development agency over the last four years. [20347]

Alun Michael: Since its formation in 1999, One NorthEast has created/safeguarded 86,607 jobs and helped 17,029 business start-ups and established companies with specific projects. It has supported and driven key projects in the region, including the regeneration of the Newcastle/Gateshead Quayside; investing £200 million in a Strategy for Success to promote new technologies, and led the regeneration of areas of once redundant industrial land, such as the £500 million Middlehaven project in Middlesbrough.

Further information can be found in the corporate plan and annual reports, available at www.onenortheast.co.uk.

Nuclear Power

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the nuclear materials accountancy system at British Nuclear Fuels Thorp reprocessing plant at Sellafield is designed to track nuclear material on a real time basis. [18272]

Malcolm Wicks: Nuclear materials accountancy is used at UK nuclear sites to help meet statutory domestic regulations and international safeguards requirements. International safeguards requirements include the timely detection of diversion of civil nuclear material. This timeliness is a function of material type and form. Some nuclear installations therefore operate 'near real time materials accountancy' to meet this safeguards requirement. The Thorp chemical plant design included the application of statistical analysis techniques at regular intervals to its nuclear material accountancy data. This 'near real time materials accountancy' was not designed for process control and is distinct from systems for monitoring the safety and security at the plant.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* polling and *(b)* focus groups on nuclear power his Department has undertaken in the last three years ;and if he will place copies of the results in the Library. [19730]

Malcolm Wicks: There has been no polling or focus groups on nuclear power since the publication of the Energy White Paper 2003.

The following papers on keeping the nuclear option open (KNOO) were prepared for the DTI's Energy Advisory Panel and contributed to the work on the Energy White Paper:

KNOO Scoping Paper (EAP 11.06.02—P3)

KNOO Summary Paper (EAP 01.10.02—P3)

KNOO Miniprojects

These papers were placed in the Libraries of the House at the start for this year in response to a written parliamentary question from the then hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 648W.

Timber

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to fund the maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [16334]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 160W by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Climate Change and Environment to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker).

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17882]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not record centrally all volunteering activities undertaken by its staff. However, the Department allows staff at least one day of paid leave a year to participate in voluntary opportunities. In recent years groups of staff have undertaken a range of volunteering challenges including 25 staff working on a project at a London adventure playground, 40 volunteers involved in an education and employment project, and this year 70 DTI staff members have worked on two other volunteering projects.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive to be implemented. [19767]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government intend to introduce to the House the regulations implementing the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive shortly.

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether a regulatory body will be put in place to ensure producers comply with the responsibilities of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [19769]

Malcolm Wicks: Compliance with the requirements of the waste electrical and electronic equipment regulations in England and Wales will primarily be monitored by the Environment Agency (England and Wales). In Scotland responsibility will be with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and in Northern Ireland it will be the Northern Ireland Environment and Heritage Service.

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the producer responsibility element of the European directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment to be implemented. [20502]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government expect the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive's main producer responsibility obligations to come into force in June 2006.

Wind Farms

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has undertaken on the potential for large scale offshore wind farms. [17607]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* In 2003 the DTI, along with the Carbon Trust, published the findings of the Renewables Innovation Review, which looked at all areas of the renewables industry including offshore wind. A copy of the Renewables Innovation Review and supporting documentation can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/renewables/renew_2.1.4.htm.

PRIME MINISTER

Chechnya

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with President Putin on *(a)* human rights and *(b)* reports of disappearances in Chechnya; and if he will make a statement. [19416]

The Prime Minister: Together with European Commission President Barroso, I discussed human rights with President Putin during the EU-Russia summit on 4 October. We also discussed the situation in the North Caucasus at some length. We underlined the need for human rights to be safeguarded in the fight against terrorism and discussed with President Putin prospects for the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Chechnya.

WALES

Welsh Language Act

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Departments of state have yet to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993 in not having adopted a language scheme; and if he will make a statement. [20304]

Mr. Hain: Although Crown bodies are not required to have a Welsh language scheme, it is the Government's practice to comply with the principle that, in the conduct of public business in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

Welsh Language Board data indicate that nine Government Departments currently have approved schemes. Two are actively preparing schemes (one of these is a replacement scheme following merger of departments). The Board has issued notifications to a further three departments, asking them to prepare a scheme.

Youth Crime

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has met the Secretary of State for the Home Department to discuss issues of youth crime in Wales. [20569]

Mr. Hain: I keep close contact with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on all policing matters in Wales. The Government are supporting a wide-ranging programme to tackle youth offending and to prevent children being drawn into crime in the first place. This includes tackling deprivation and working with families and education services, along with on-going implementation of the 10-year anti-drugs strategy. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced a major new drive to increase the take-up of parenting contracts and orders, as part of our strategy for fostering respect in society.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Cultural Industries (South-West)

8. **Linda Gilroy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contribution of cultural industries to the economy in the south-west region. [20221]

Mr. Lammy: The cultural industries make a significant contribution to the economy in the south-west. The South West Regional Development Agency estimates that creative sector employment accounts for around 4 per cent. of the regional workforce, and there are strong TV and film production, computer graphics and interactive media clusters in this area. I am confident that with continued help and support at national and regional level, the cultural industries will continue to be successful.

Licensing Act

9. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent assessment she has made of the implications for binge drinking of the changes proposed by the Licensing Act 2003. [20222]

James Purnell: We believe that the new licensing regime will allow a more responsible attitude to drinking to develop through removing the current arrangements which encourage people to drink as much as possible before last orders and create flashpoints for conflict through late night queuing for transport and fast food.

The new Act will give the police and local authorities more effective, rapid and better targeted powers to tackle problem premises.

16. **Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the likely health impact of the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [20230]

James Purnell: Licensing reform is not primarily aimed at addressing health problems associated with alcohol—those are complex issues that are more appropriately being dealt with through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and the measures set out in the Health White Paper. Nevertheless, we believe the Act will help us tackle the problems covered by irresponsible drinking including the effects on health. Our monitoring of the impact of the Act will include effects on heath.

18. **Lynda Waltho:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what opportunities will be given to local organisations and residents to contest licence extensions or renewals under the new Licensing Act 2003. [20232]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 brings in new opportunities for residents, police and others to seek a review of a licence at any time that problems occur. This contrasts with the current regime whereby only 0.2 per cent. of alcohol licences are revoked and a court based renewal process that does not engage local people and is often intimidating.

BBC

10. **Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment the Department has made of the decision to open up 25 per cent. of BBC production to independent companies. [20223]

James Purnell: We will assess the BBC's proposals against the goal of delivering the best possible programmes for licence payers, and respond in the White Paper. We believe that goal will be met by balancing competition from independent producers with a supporting and thriving base of in-house production.

19. **Mrs. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what further initiatives the Government will take to promote ongoing public involvement with the BBC following the review of its charter. [20233]

Tessa Jowell: As explained in the Green Paper, we will establish a new "BBC Trust" which will embody the public interest and reflect the views of the licence fee payer. Part of the Trust's remit will be to ensure communication and consultation with licence fee payers through a rolling programme of quantitative and qualitative research, viewer forums and decision-making based on direct engagement with the public.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost in real terms of the BBC licence fee has been in each of the last 30 years. [19838]

James Purnell: The value, as at April 2005 (the date of the latest licence fee increase), of the colour television licence fee for each of the last 30 years was:

£

	Colour TV licence fee	*Value at April 2005 prices*
1975	18.00	105.39
1976	18.00	88.63
1977	21.00	86.52
1978	25.00	92.93
1979	34.00	108.15
1980	34.00	98.53
1981	46.00	112.84
1982	46.00	108.74
1983	46.00	104.56
1984	46.00	99.45
1985	58.00	117.28
1986	58.00	113.80
1987	60.00	112.92
1988	62.50	113.19
1989	66.00	110.62
1990	71.00	108.77
1991	77.00	110.88
1992	80.00	110.40
1993	83.00	113.13
1994	84.50	112.30
1995	86.50	111.24
1996	89.50	112.41
1997	91.50	112.18
1998	97.50	114.86
1999	101.00	117.16
2000	104.00	117.10
2001	109.00	120.66
2002	112.00	122.08
2003	116.00	122.61
2004	121.00	124.87
2005	126.50	126.50

Note:
The upratings are based on the percentage changes in the all items Retail Prices Index from the month of the licence fee increase (or April of the relevant year in years where there was no increase) to April 2005.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ensure future decisions on extending local BBC services are based on *(a)* public value and market impact tests, *(b)* the conclusions of Ofcom's review of local television services and *(c)* public consultation on the role for commercial media. [18601]

James Purnell: The Green Paper on BBC Charter Review makes clear that all new services and significant changes must be subject to public value and market impact assessments. Policy in this area will be set out in more detail in the forthcoming White Paper.

2012 Olympics

11. **Ms Angela C. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to encourage regional development agencies to maximise the commercial benefits to the regions of hosting the 2012 Olympic games. [20224]

Mr. Caborn: We will build on the excellent work carried out by the Nations and Regions Group during the bid phase. The Group will meet in November. We will continue to encourage the support and involvement of the RDAs.

15. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to undertake appraisals of the facilities in the south-east which may be used as part of hosting the 2012 Olympic games. [20229]

Tessa Jowell: London 2012 undertook a full appraisal of facilities required to stage the Olympics before the bid was submitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The proposals reflect the IOC wishes for a compact and secure Olympics Games.

I am delighted that Eton Dorney in the South East Region will host the Olympic rowing events in 2012.

17. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to involve East Anglia in the London Olympics. [20231]

Mr. Caborn: There are a number of ways in which people across the UK can get involved in the Games, as suppliers, volunteers, participants or spectators. In addition, events such as the Olympic torch relay and the Cultural Festival will be UK wide.

The Nations and Regions Group, will meet in November to discuss progress, and I am pleased to note the continued involvement of the Regional

Development Agencies, the Regional Sports Boards and representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans there are to hold events in Northern Ireland as part of the 2012 Olympic games. [20533]

Mr. Caborn: At present no Olympic or Paralympic sporting competition is planned to take place in Northern Ireland. If Northern Ireland builds its planned national stadium, we will consider incorporating this venue as a location for the Olympic football competition.

However, the torch relay and other events as part of the cultural Olympiad are planned to take place in Northern Ireland to help ensure the people of Northern Ireland can be part of and share in the excitement of the 2012 games.

Art (Crosby)

12. **Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the role of art in economic regeneration, with particular reference to Crosby. [20226]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has long been an advocate for the power of art—and culture in general—to regenerate areas, not just economically, but socially and environmentally. And I applaud the wonderful work that Antony Gormley has created in Crosby with the "Another Place" installation, in the north-east with the Angel of the North and on a local level in areas such as the Bellenden Renewal Area in Peckham, South London.

Lottery Funds Distribution

13. **Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take action to reduce the unspent lottery balance. [20227]

Mr. Caborn: We are already taking action and Lottery balances have been reduced by more than a third. We will continue working with distributors to make more progress.

14. **Mr. Ellwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the process for the distribution of national lottery funds. [20228]

Mr. Caborn: The distribution of Lottery money to the good causes is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Part II of the National Lottery etc Act 1993, as amended by the National Lottery Act 1998.

Directions provide that Lottery funding must be accessible to all sections of the population and all areas of the country, especially those at risk of social exclusion. In order to ensure that Lottery money is allocated fairly and equitably, in the light of need across the whole of the United Kingdom and between different groups in society, distributors are required to show how they will achieve this in their strategic plans.

Art Galleries

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many art galleries in England are in receipt of funding from the Arts Council. [20425]

Mr. Lammy: There are 295 art galleries in England that receive funding from Arts Council England (ACE).

ACE directly funds 93 art galleries and 59 touring art galleries. It also funds 143 gallery spaces. These include museum galleries, independent galleries, artist studio galleries, new media spaces, live art photography and moving images galleries through its grants for the arts programme.

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the rates of employee absence in her Department have been in each year since 1997. [21029]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at:

< http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp >

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures she is taking to ensure that local and community radio has access to digital bandwidth for transmission. [19772]

James Purnell: The independent regulator, Ofcom, is responsible for planning frequencies for independent radio in the UK. Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, my officials have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his response. Copies of the chief executive's letter will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures *(a)* her Department and *(b)* Ofcom is taking to promote take-up of digital (i) radio and (ii) television. [19773]

James Purnell: The information is as follows.

(a) (i) The Government work with Ofcom and the industry to ensure that digital radio has the right conditions to be able to develop successfully.

(ii) The Government are currently running a campaign, targeted towards consumers who do not yet have digital television, to help inform them of the

benefits of digital television and why switchover is happening. To help make digital television options clear to consumers, the Government launched the digital switchover Certification Mark in 2004. It certifies information, goods and services that are designed to help consumers through switchover. This is helping to raise the awareness of digital switchover, and is now visible in retailers across the UK and also on TV and recording equipment of most leading brands.

(b) Ofcom supports the overall planning for digital switchover through a mixture of research, analysis and policy initiatives. Ofcom is also committed to help drive digital switchover as it would ensure a more technically and economically efficient use of spectrum, encourage investment in new digital services and would promote competition in broadcasting, all of which are key responsibilities for Ofcom. Ofcom wholeheartedly supports the development of DAB digital radio.

Additionally two independent not-for-profit organisations, the Digital Radio Development Bureau and Digital UK, have been set up to promote the take-up of digital radio and co-ordinate the UK's switch to digital television respectively.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* people and *(b)* households in the (i) United Kingdom and (ii) Forest of Dean constituency receive analogue but cannot receive digital, television signals. [19775]

James Purnell: The vast majority of households in the UK can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via at least one of satellite, digital terrestrial or cable.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but the Government are committed to ensuring that at digital switchover everyone in the UK who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them on digital systems.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number and percentage of households in the *(a)* United Kingdom and *(b)* Forest of Dean constituency that can receive (i) publicly and (ii) commercially funded digital radio by means other than the internet. [19776]

James Purnell: Digital radio is carried across the UK on a number of platforms. We do not have precise estimates of the number and percentage of households who can receive digital radio in the form you have asked. However, the overwhelming majority of households in the UK can receive both publicly and commercially funded digital radio by platforms other than the internet. This would also be true for households in the Forest of Dean constituency.

Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list *(a)* heritage and *(b)* conservation sites in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead. [16078]

Mr. Lammy: In the constituency of Hemel Hempstead, there are 495 buildings which are listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990,16 scheduled ancient monuments, three registered parks and gardens, and 11 conservation areas.

I am arranging for English Heritage, the Secretary of State's statutory adviser on the historic environment, to provide the Libraries of both Houses with lists of these.

Historic Buildings (Suffolk)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* listed buildings and *(b)* scheduled monuments are within 50 metres of the high water mark along the Suffolk coast. [19967]

Mr. Lammy: There are five scheduled monuments, one of which is also a listed building, and a further 27 listed buildings within 50 metres of the high water mark, as defined by the Ordnance Survey Boundary Line data set, along the Suffolk coast.

Licensed Premises

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the Answer of 27 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1276W, on licensed premises, if she will estimate *(a)* the number of licensed premises classified as pubs and *(b)* the number of licensed premises classified as pubs serving prepared food in England. [18892]

James Purnell: There is no distinction made in licensing law between public houses and other forms of premises licensed to sell alcohol. Of 105,595 establishments so licensed in England, my Department estimates that 58,000 are traditional public houses.

In the November 2004 White paper, Choosing Health, the Department of Health estimated that between 10 per cent. and 30 per cent. of those 58,000 establishments serve prepared food. Extensive research on this subject over the summer by Action on Smoking and Health suggests that the true proportion is towards the upper end of that range.

Licensing Authorities

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what guidance has been provided to licensing authorities when considering whether to modify or add conditions to the operational schedule of a premise licence before it is granted; [18663]

(2) what guidance has been provided to licensing authorities on the criteria to be used in deciding whether to refuse to issue a licence rather than to modify or add conditions to the operational schedule of a premise licence. [18664]

James Purnell: Comprehensive statutory guidance in relation to the new licensing regime was issued to licensing authorities by my Department in July 2004. This included advice about applying conditions to a premises licence and examples of what might be appropriate.

Local licensing authorities consider applications for premises licences on a case by case basis. Decisions about whether to refuse, accept or modify a licence will take into account representations from responsible authorities and interested parties. In this regard, the four licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder; prevention of public nuisance; public safety; and the protection of children from harm) are paramount considerations at all times. Conditions are applied to a licence where these safeguard the four licensing objectives.

Motorsports

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many motorsport projects have been financially supported by the Government through the Motorsport Unit since its inception; what total amount of Government assistance they have received; how many of these projects are in Gloucestershire; how much each project in Gloucestershire has received; and if she will make a statement. [20294]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* As Secretary of State for Trade and Industry my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Ms Hewitt) announced on 11 July 2003 a Government commitment of £16 million over five years to fund the recommendations of the Motorsport Competitiveness Panel.

Motorsport Development UK (MDUK) is now taking forward those recommendations and has financially supported five projects, the spend on which is shown:

Project theme	*Spend to date (£)*
Motorsport Academy	364,898
The Learning Grid	442,230
Business Development	213,545
Energy Efficient Motorsport	463,726
Widening Participation	265,574
Total project spend	1,749,973

All projects have a national significance to motorsport and therefore no breakdown by county is available.

Premier League (TV Rights)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* financial assistance and *(b)* legal assistance, Ofcom has offered to the European Commission on deciding the structure of Premier League television broadcasting rights from season 2007–08 onwards. [20276]

James Purnell: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom, as independent regulator. Accordingly, officials have asked the chief executive to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions Ofcom has had since 1 June 2004 with telecommunications regulatory bodies in other EU countries on the matter of football television broadcasting rights. [20277]

James Purnell: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom, as independent regulator. Accordingly, officials have asked the chief executive to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Television Licences

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of households which did not have a television licence but had a television in each of the last five years for which records are available. [19066]

James Purnell: The estimated number of premises requiring a television licence but where no licence was in force, as at the end of March for each of the last five years, was:

million

	Estimated number of unlicensed premises
2001	1.70
2002	1.65
2003	1.55
2004	1.35
2005	1.3

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in the Pudsey constituency are in receipt of the free television licence for over-75s. [18920]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Pudsey constituency in 2004–05 was 5,705, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Television Signals

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of *(a)* people and *(b)* households in (i) Kettering constituency, (ii) Northamptonshire and (iii) England can receive analogue but not digital television signals. [20283]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The vast majority of households in England can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via at least one of digital satellite, digital terrestrial or cable.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency or county but the Government are committed to ensuring that at digital switchover everyone in the UK who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them on digital systems.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what is the Electoral Commission's predicted drop in registration as a result of a switch to individual registration for each region of the UK. [20279]

Peter Viggers: Individual registration of voters was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2002. The commission has published a series of research reports analysing the impact of the change on registration rates there.

The Electoral Commission has recommended the introduction of full individual registration in the remainder of the United Kingdom both on grounds of principle and to enhance public confidence in the arrangements for postal voting by reducing the scope for fraud in this area.

The commission informs me that it has not undertaken any detailed research into the likely impact of the introduction of full individual registration in Great Britain on levels of voter registration. Such research, the commission advises, would involve making a number of speculative assumptions, and would thus be open to a significant margin of error.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much has been spent on the Afghan drugs eradication programme; and how many hectares of poppies have been eradicated; [20253]

(2) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* effectiveness and *(b)* value for money of the Afghan drugs eradication programme. [20254]

Dr. Howells: The UK, as lead nation on counter narcotics (CN), is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their eight pillar 2005 CN Implementation Plan and in updating their National Drug Control Strategy. The UK provides assistance across all eight pillars of the 2005 CN plan, which include building institutions, an information campaign, developing the rural economy and providing alternatives for poppy farmers, interdiction and law enforcement, criminal justice, eradication, demand reduction and the treatment of addicts, and regional cooperation.

On 5 September, I announced new UK funding for Afghan CN in a joint press conference with Afghan CN Minister Qaderi. The UK is to provide more than £270 million over the next three years. £130 million of the funding will be provided by the Department for International Development with the rest coming from other Government Departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence. In this financial year, the UK is spending in the region of £100 million on all CN activity, £50 million of which is for alternative livelihoods. £6 million is for eradication activity.

Eradication is one of the ways of inserting risk into the Afghan drugs industry. However, it needs to be balanced with wider measures to interrupt the drugs trade, to take action against the traffickers and to build up Afghan criminal justice capacity to deal with drugs offenders. The UK does not carry out any direct eradication but provides targeting, monitoring and financial support, bilaterally and through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). We also provided financial support to the Afghan National Police (ANP) for eradication.

Supported by the US, the Central Poppy Eradication Force (CPEF) and, more recently, the ANP and provincial governors have eradicated poppy this season. We understand that the final figures in the UNODC Survey for 2005 will confirm that while eradication by CPEF this year was disappointing (at around 200 hectares), eradication by governors and the ANP was more effective (around 4,800 hectares). The final UNODC survey is due to be published at any time.

For further information on the counter narcotics programme in Afghanistan, I refer to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 234–35W. I intend to make a further statement to the House in the next month.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions the head of the interdepartmental Afghan drugs unit has visited Afghanistan; and which provinces he has visited outside greater Kabul. [20255]

Dr. Howells: The Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit (ADIDU) was established by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 1 February 2005. Based at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), it consists of 17 staff from the Department for International Development, the FCO, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence.

ADIDU works closely with the British Embassy Drugs Team (BEDT) in Kabul which has 13 staff. While ADIDU sets the direction of policies and programmes to enable delivery, BEDT manages this delivery on the ground, liaising with the Afghan Government and international partners.

Peter Holland (head, ADIDU) has visited Afghanistan twice since his appointment in February. He visited for one week in May 2005 and for two weeks in October 2005. In addition to time spent in Kabul, he has visited the provinces of Balkh and Farah.

Al-Qaeda Training Camps

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of al-Qaeda training camps in operation in overseas locations. [16906]

Dr. Howells: We continue to monitor carefully the activities of the al Qaeda network. For reasons of security, we do not provide details of our work. However, it is well known, that al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan have been destroyed. We assess that concerted international

pressure on al Qaeda has reduced its capability, but that the terrorist network continues to present a major threat to international security.

Azerbaijan

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will make representations to the Government of Azerbaijan on ensuring the parliamentary elections on 6 November are orderly, peaceful, free and fair. [19448]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We continue to engage directly with the President and Government of Azerbaijan, the Central Election Commission, the main political parties and key non-governmental organisations on the need for parliamentary elections that meet international standards. We support the work on electoral integrity of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Council of Europe and, as EU presidency, have made regular representations on behalf of the EU.

Central America

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the priority his Department accords to diplomatic representation in central America. [20538]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The December 2003 White Paper "UK International Priorities: a strategy for the FCO" (Cm 6052) set out the Government's international priorities for the next 10 years and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strategy for delivering them. We currently have three embassies and one high commission in Central America helping to deliver that strategy in Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica and Panama. We also have an embassy in Mexico.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, dated *(a)* 16 June 2005, with regard to Mrs. Z. Khanum, *(b)* 13 June 2005, with regard to Mr. Abdul Rehman and *(c)* 8 July 2005, with regard to El Hadja Souley Manou. [19515]

Dr. Howells: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office replied to my right hon. Friend's letters with regard to Mrs. Z. Khanum, Mr. Abdul Rehman and El Hadja Souley Manou on 18 October.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who is responsible for running the Foreign and Commonwealth Office estate *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* abroad; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [20265]

Mr. Straw: The head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Estates Strategy Unit that is principally responsible for running the FCO estate in the UK and abroad is Mr. Geoff Gillham. He is a qualified economist and spent six years in the private sector before joining the FCO. His immediate deputy is an experienced chartered surveyor: the majority of the unit they lead are qualified property or finance professionals. Mr. Gillham has served in a number of positions in London and, overseas, in New Delhi, Paris (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), Madrid and Caracas.

ECHR

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by the Government since 1997 on defending cases at the European Court of Human Rights. [19736]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not hold comprehensive records of the sums spent defending each separate case, including counsel fees, travel and subsistence. These are borne by the lead Government Department, which is not usually the FCO.

Greek Cypriots (Compensation)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what negotiations have taken place during the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union on settling disputes over land and financial compensation to Greek Cypriots following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. [19963]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no negotiations during the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union on this matter.

The UN Secretary General's comprehensive settlement plan contained provisions for the return of, and compensation for, property. We continue to believe that the best way of resolving these difficult issues is as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the basis of the UN Secretary General's plan.

Israel

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the Israeli security fence on the number of suicide bombings in Israel. [20284]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* We have not made any recent specific assessment, but we believe that the barrier has helped reduce the number of suicide bombings in Israel. We fully recognise the Israeli Government's right to defend their citizens against terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, and we acknowledge that a barrier is a reasonable way to achieve this. But we call for the barrier to be built on or behind the green line. Building the barrier on occupied territory is contrary to international law.

Maldives

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Government of the Maldives about the trial of Mohamed Nasheed, Chairman of the Maldives Democratic party, and

others, following the recent Lawrence report on the judicial process in the Maldives undertaken by the Bar Council. [19742]

Dr. Howells: We welcome the efforts of Sir Ivan Lawrence QC and his colleagues. We continue to remind the Government of the Maldives of its human rights obligations. Soon after the arrest of Mohamed Nasheed, the British Deputy High Commissioner in Colombo, accredited to the Maldives, raised the arrests with the Maldivian Foreign Minister. The high commission, as presidency, led an EU fact-finding mission to the Maldives, which met Ministers, officials and Mohamed Nasheed. Following this, the EU issued a statement on 2 September 2005. It noted the seriousness of the charges, called for due process and made clear that the credibility of trials would be scrutinised closely. The British high commissioner called on President Gayoom on 26 September 2005. He emphasised the key messages of the EU statement and drew attention to the simultaneous visit of Sir Ivan Lawrence. We are, with EU partners, actively considering further action.

Palestine

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures the UK Government have taken as a state party to the fourth Geneva convention to fulfil its obligation to take measures to ensure compliance with the convention under the ruling of the International Court of Justice ruling of 9 July 2004, no. 131, legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the occupied Palestinian territory. [20528]

Dr. Howells: We supported United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES (Emergency Session) 10/15 which acknowledged the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion of 9 July 2004 on the legal consequences of the construction of the barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory. We agree with the broad conclusion of the ICJ, that building a barrier on parts of the current route is unlawful. We have discussed the way forward with EU partners and others, and we continue to urge Israel to comply with international law.

United Nations Day

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which ways the UK Government plan to mark United Nations Day on 24 October. [21070]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and other Government Ministers will be attending a service at St. Paul's Cathedral on 24 October marking the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations. Senior staff from the UK Permanent Mission in New York will also be attending commemoration events hosted by the Secretary-General at the UN headquarters.

In addition, as a strong and committed supporter of the United Nations, the Government have organised a series of events to mark its 60th anniversary. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary hosted a reception and gave a speech at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 27 June to mark the anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter. The Government also plan to mark the first meeting of the UN General Assembly at Westminster Central Hall on 10 January 1946.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

First-class Post

Andrew Selous: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the Commission will undertake an urgent investigation into the reasons that House of Commons franked first-class post regularly fails to reach hon. Members at any point during the day after posting. [20884]

Nick Harvey: There have been some teething problems with the interface between the new screening process and the mail service. The two contractors are working together to resolve these as quickly as possible.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent in each of the last five years for which figures are available to reduce benefit fraud; and if he will make a statement. [15490]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

The overall aim of the Department's anti-fraud strategy is to have a benefit system, which is secure from first claim to final payment. The implementation of this strategy means that an anti-fraud focus is integral to the work of all staff in the Department, as is dealing with the wider agenda of error and incorrectness in benefit payments. It is therefore not possible to account for the cost of anti-fraud work separately.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of carpal tunnel syndrome were granted compensation under industrial injuries legislation in each of the last five years, broken down by industry in which these cases arose. [18951]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is set out in the following table.

The number of carpal tunnel syndrome cases granted compensation under the industrial injuries legislation broken down by industry

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	—	5	—	—	5
Fishing	—	—	—	—	—
Mining and quarrying	—	—	—	—	—
Manufacturing	30	50	65	65	75
Electricity, gas and water supply	—	—	5	10	5

The number of carpal tunnel syndrome cases granted compensation under the industrial injuries legislation broken down by industry

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Construction	15	20	30	25	25
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	5	5	5	10	10
Hotels and restaurants business services and leasing	—	—	—	—	—
Transport, storage and communication	5	—	5	5	—
Financial intermediation	—	—	—	—	—
Real estate, renting and business activities	5	10	10	5	—
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	5	5	10	10	—
Education	—	—	5	5	—
Health and social work	5	5	5	5	—
Other community, social and personal activities	5	10	5	5	—
Private households with employed persons	—	—	—	—	—
Extra-territorial organisations and bodies	—	—	—	—	—

Notes:
1. The year ending figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 to ensure anonymity.
2. Figures are based on a 100 per cent. count.
3. Figures for 2004 are provisional, as they have not yet been finalised.

Source:
Clerical returns from Disablement Benefit Offices

Marginal Deduction Rates

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the value of passported benefits is taken into account when figures on marginal deduction rates are produced. [18633]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Marginal deduction rates are calculated by combining figures for marginal tax rates, national insurance rates, tax credit taper rates, and benefit withdrawal rates. The concept of a marginal deduction rate is less meaningful when applied to passported benefits since they are "all or nothing" benefits that are not tapered with income.

Pension Credit

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency *(a)* received state pension, *(b)* applied for pension credit and *(c)* received pension credit in each of the last three years; and what the average pension credit payment was in each year. [15890]

Mr. Timms: The June Pension Credit figures, which are available in the Library, show that 5,280 households (6,440 individuals) in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk were in receipt of pension credit, with an average award of £35.80. Earlier figures for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk and other newly created constituencies are not available. Information on the number of people who have applied for or are eligible for pension credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies.

Notes:
1. Numbers of households and individuals are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individuals comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.

Pension Service

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls made to the Pension Service have *(a)* met an engaged tone, *(b)* been received and *(c)* been handled by an adviser in the last 24 months, broken down by call centre. [18621]

Mr. Timms: The administration of The Pension Service is a matter for the Chief Executive, Ms Alexis Cleveland. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Alexis Cleveland to Mr. David Laws, dated 24 October 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many calls made to The Pension Service have *(a)* met an engaged tone *(b)* been received and *(c)* been handled by an adviser in the last 24 months broken down by call centre. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of The Pension Service.

For the period August 2003 to August 2005, in excess of 27 million calls were received by Regional Pension Centres/ Pension Credit Application Line and over 25 million were answered by agents, equating to 91.2 per cent. of total calls received.

Of the 27 million calls received only 337,306 (1.2 per cent.) were blocked (attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message during this period).

The table below shows the number of calls received, answered and blocked for the period August 2003 to August 2005 for all Regional Pension Centres and the Pension Credit Application Line:

Breakdown by Pension Centre	*Total calls (b)*	*Attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message (a)*	*Calls answered (c)*
Bath	1,127,452	3,363	1,067,063
Birmingham	882,656	14,698	815,541
Blackpool	438,384	942	389,772
Burnley	910,434	39,897	802,491
Cwmbran	668,684	127	614,560
Bourne Valley	1,030,207	2,831	893,606

Breakdown by Pension Centre	Total calls (b)	Attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message (a)	Calls answered (c)
Derby	472,655	13,762	426,837
Dundee	1,509,164	18,039	1,439,201
Leicester	649,794	164	601,002
Liverpool	380,679	8,921	341,010
London Pension Centre (Glasgow)	471,114	136	436,518
London Pension Centre (Newcastle)	1,140,790	64,402	1,101,948
Motherwell	1,284,055	3,074	1,174,722
Norwich Baltic	571,533	2,135	499,895
Norwich Kingfisher	791,775	494	697,690
Nottingham	536,304	4,778	462,727
Pension Credit Application Line	5,453,721	64	5,083,456
Plymouth	584,468	6,906	587,064
Seaham	865,587	34,670	791,625
Stockport	1,380,127	9,547	1,217,641
Stockton	680,792	16,679	627,120
Swansea	1,646,814	24,317	1,487,042
Walsall	601,880	1,754	548,437
Warrington	1,234,200	17,891	1,105,124
Wolverhampton	761,150	3,280	700,351
Wrexham	844,788	1,121	761,644
York	514,494	3,317,	448,608
Total	27,671,340	337,306	25,226,101

Poverty

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* children and *(b)* pensioners were living in poverty in (i) Walsall borough and (ii) Walsall North constituency in (A) 1997 and (B) 2005. [19889]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The information requested is not available below regional level. The latest information for the West Midlands is shown in the following table.

Numbers of children and pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of median income in the West Midlands

million

	1996–97	*2003–04*
Children:		
Before housing costs	0.4	0.3
After housing costs	0.4	0.4
Pensioners:		
Before housing costs	0.2	0.2
After housing costs	0.3	0.2

Notes:
1. The estimates use the same methodology as the Department for Work and Pensions publication 'Households Below Average Income' (BHAI) series which uses disposable household income, adjusted for household size and composition, as an income measure as a proxy for standard of living.
2. It is not possible to present estimates from the FRS below Government Office Region level due to small sample sizes, and the survey design not being fully representative at this level.
3. Estimates are based on sample counts which have been adjusted for non-response.

Source:
Family Resources Survey (FRS)

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what is his latest estimate of the total value of unfunded liabilities of public sector pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [20682]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 306W to the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond).

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to put public sector pension schemes on a funded basis; and if he will make a statement. [20683]

Mr. Des Browne: I have been asked to reply.

There are no plans to fund unfunded public service pension schemes. The employer and employee contributions levied for unfunded schemes are set to cover the accruing long term liability to pay the pensions of scheme members; these contributions are not paid into a fund.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Cycle Allowance

Tom Brake: To ask the Leader of the House how many hon. Members claimed the cycle allowance in the last period for which figures are available; and how much each of the 10 highest claimers claimed. [20635]

Mr. Hoon: Eleven Members claimed a total of £888.62 in bicycle allowances in financial year 2004–05. The amounts claimed by each of the top 10 highest claimers were as follows:

£250.00
£242.80
£175.26
£81.60
£36.00
£34.96
£22.88
£18.40
£12.80
£12.32.

Scottish Legislation (Scrutiny)

David Mundell: To ask the Leader of the House how much parliamentary time was spent scrutinising Scottish legislation between 1993 and 1999, broken down by legislative stage. [20656]

Mr. Hoon: Information is only readily available for Bills certified by the Speaker as relating exclusively to Scotland, or ordered to be proceeded with as if they had been so certified. The figures are on a sessional (rather than calendar year) basis, and exclude time spent in Standing or Grand Committees. For Sessions 1992–93 to 1999–2000, the time taken on the floor of the House for such Bills is as follows:

Session	*Second Reading*	*Committee of the whole House*	*Consideration*	*Third Reading*	*Lords Amendments*
1992–93	7hrs 45mins	—	6hrs 31mins	52mins	22mins
1993–94	6hrs 58mins	—	12hrs 6mins	3hrs 26mins	5hrs 37mins
1994–95	5hrs 54mins	—	10hrs 50mins	35mins	—
1995–96	7hrs 5mins	—	5hrs 36mins	34mins	—
1996–97	6hrs 55mins	8mins	6hrs 29mins	1hr 1min	—
1997–98	—	—	—	—	—
1998–99	4hrs 32mins	—	2hrs 14mins	1hr	—
1999–2000	—	—	—	—	—

Written Questions

Ben Chapman: To ask the Leader of the House if he will introduce proposals to allow tabling and answer of written parliamentary questions during the summer recess. [19708]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for West Derbyshire (Mr. McLoughlin) on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 882W.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Air Weapons

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many air weapon offences have been committed in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21634]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable has supplied the following table of statistics.

Offences recorded by the police where an air gun was involved in the incident[1]

	Overall crime			
District command unit	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antrim	3	3	5	8
Ards	7	12	16	16
Armagh	0	2	0	2
Banbridge	2	1	1	5
East Belfast	12	4	10	11
North Belfast	4	3	7	12
South Belfast	1	5	3	1
West Belfast	8	3	42	21
Ballymena	10	2	1	2
Ballymoney	1	0	0	1
Carrickfergus	9	2	18	19
Coleraine	2	3	8	18
Cookstown	1	0	3	1
Craigavon	10	3	6	31
Castlereagh	18	4	5	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1	1	4	1
Down	4	1	7	14
Fermanagh	2	2	0	1
Foyle	1	0	1	13
Larne	10	0	4	19
Limavady	1	1	9	16
Lisburn	10	5	1	5
Magherafelt	2	1	0	3
Moyle	0	0	1	1
Newtownabbey	2	12	17	26
North Down	5	3	5	10
Newry and Mourne	14	11	6	13
Omagh	2	3	3	9
Strabane	0	3	3	2
Northern Ireland	142	90	186	283

[1] These figures relate to offences where an air gun was involved in the incident—it is not known how the air gun was actually used.

Note:

PSNI record figures related to the number of crimes where an air gun has been used in the incident. Included within the air gun category are air pistol, air rifle, air gun, and ball bearing gun.

Source:

Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Avian Influenza

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent guidance has been issued to poultry owners in Northern Ireland in relation to Avian influenza; and what discussions he has had with the Ulster Farmers Union about such guidance. [20779]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland re-issued guidance to poultry producers in late August 2005 on the biosecurity precautions poultry owners should take to minimise the introduction of disease. Following publication of an Avian influenza risk assessment in early September 2005, the Department issued a statement providing an update on the steps it has taken to address the risk of Avian influenza entering Northern Ireland. Further revised guidance has been placed on the DARD website on 19 October 2005 and this will be disseminated to the poultry industry and will be reviewed and updated as appropriate. A series of meetings with stakeholders has been held since December 2004 to provide guidance and exchange information between Government and key industry representative bodies. The Ulster Farmers' Union have been involved in all relevant meetings to date.

Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time was that patients in the Province waited for treatment for cancer of the brain in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20062]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for cancer treatment is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of women referred urgently in the last 12 months by their general practitioner with suspected breast cancer were seen by a consultant in the Province within two weeks. [20042]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not currently available due to data quality issues. The data collection system is to be reviewed.

I refer the hon. Member to an audit of Breast Cancer Services in Northern Ireland produced by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, which is found at:

http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/pdf/publications/audit_breast.pdf

The audit reported that for patients diagnosed with Breast Cancer in 2001, the majority (69 per cent.) of patients were seen within two weeks of being referred by their GP.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time was that patients in the Province waited for treatment of prostate cancer in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20063]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for the treatment of prostate cancer is not collected centrally.

I refer the hon. Lady to an audit of Prostate Cancer Services in Northern Ireland produced by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry which is found at: http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/pdf/publications/audit_prostate.pdf

A table containing a summary of waiting times experienced by prostate cancer patients can be found on page 17.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many surgeons at each hospital in the Province carried out more than 50 prostate operations in the last year for which figures are available. [20044]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of operations carried out in Northern Ireland is available from the Hospital Inpatient System, however details of individual surgeons undertaking the operations are not collected.

The table shows the hospitals in Northern Ireland where the number of prostate operations carried out in 2004–05 (the latest year for which data is available) exceeded 50. It should be noted that more than one surgeon could be responsible for undertaking prostate operations at any one of these hospitals.

Hospital	*Number of prostate operations*
Belfast City	535
Ards	86
Ulster	103
Mater	129
Downe	84
Causeway	168
Antrim	100
Craigavon	88
Altnagelvin	292

Source:
Hospital Inpatient System

Cars

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cars were registered in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [19940]

Angela E. Smith: The number of cars registered in Northern Ireland in each year of the last 10 years is as follows:

	Number
1994	76,529
1995	81,410
1996	87,614
1997	93,870
1998	100,947
1999	99,490
2000	95,018
2001	98,789
2002	93,866
2003	97,374
2004	96,058

Cervical Screening

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when liquid-based cervical cytology screening will be introduced in the Province. [20067]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1221W.

Child Support Agency Management Board

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the breakdown of the Child Support Agency Management Board in Northern Ireland by religious background. [20774]

Mr. Hanson: Information on community background of staff in the Child Support Agency in Northern Ireland is contained in the Eighth Report of the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Department of Finance and Personnel but is not disaggregated at this level. Copies of the report are available in the House of Commons Library.

Clinical Academics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many clinical academics taught medical students in the Province in the last year for which figures are available. [20069]

Mr. Woodward: The last full academic year for which figures are available is 2004–05. In that year, there were 64 clinical academics involved in teaching medical students.

Cold Case Reviews

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there have been any changes to *(a)* the remit, *(b)* the terms and conditions of the investigating officers and *(c)* the manner and conduct of the investigation in the cold case reviews undertaken by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [20776]

Mr. Woodward: My right hon. Friend, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Murphy), announced in March 2005 the provision of additional funds to the Chief Constable to enable him to set up a new unit within PSNI to review the unresolved deaths due to the security situation between 1969 and 1998.

I have been advised by the PSNI that since then there have been no changes to *(a)* the remit of the historical inquiry team which is currently being established to undertake this review, *(b)* the terms and conditions of the investigating officers and *(c)* the manner and conduct of the investigations to be undertaken by this team.

The work of the historical inquiry team is due to formally commence early in the new year and it remains the case that the key aims of the team are to achieve, where possible, closure for the families of victims either by judicial or non-judicial means, in a way that commands the confidence of the wider community.

Contaminated Land

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of *(a)* the value and *(b)* the acreage of contaminated land in Northern Ireland. [19454]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment does not hold estimates of either the area or value of contaminated land in Northern Ireland. The Department of the Environment's land use database has

identified locations where former land use may have caused contamination. It does not however, quantify the areas of land involved.

Cyclists (Prosecutions)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions have been brought against cyclists for cycling on pavements in each of the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by Police Service of Northern Ireland district. [19528]

Mr. Woodward: The latest court proceedings data for calendar years 1999 to 2003 (the latter being the most up-to-date data presently available) confirm that there were no prosecutions for 'riding a pedal cycle on a footpath'.

Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in the Province were registered with a dentist in 1997. [18429]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the table as follows.

	Number
Children registered with an NHS Dentist, June 1997[1,2]	285,960

[1] Figures are derived from dental registration data.
[2] Figures for registered patients include a small proportion who may reside temporarily elsewhere in the UK.

Disabled Drivers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what powers *(a)* the police and *(b)* local authorities have to deal with the improper use of disabled parking bays by able-bodied drivers; [19551]

(2) how many people were fined for offences directly relating to the improper use of *(a)* disabled vehicle stickers and *(b)* disabled parking spaces in each of the last three years. [19552]

Mr. Woodward: Police and traffic wardens are able to enforce violations of on-street disabled parking by advice and warning or the issue of a fixed penalty notice. The following table provides the number of fines issued by police and traffic wardens for on-street disabled parking offences in each of the last three years:

	Type of offence	
	Parking in a disabled person's parking space	*Wrongful use of a disabled person's badge*
2002	2,002	8
2003	2,341	6
2004	2,331	13

Responsibility for the enforcement of off-street disabled parking spaces in public car parks rests with the Department of Regional Development's (DRD) Roads Service.

There is not a major difficulty with the misuse of off-street disabled parking spaces and Roads Service have not had to make any prosecutions against offenders in the last three years.

Doctors' Salaries

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money was spent by each health board on salaries for doctors *(a)* on suspension and *(b)* absent on special leave in each of the last three years. [19556]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Education and Library Boards

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the overall deficit of each education and library board in Northern Ireland is for the year 2005–06. [19941]

Angela E. Smith: In common with all public bodies, the five Education and Library Boards are required to live within the allocations voted by Parliament. The final 2005–06 position will not be known until after the year end, once the 2005–06 Accounts are received. However, the Department expects all Boards to remain within budget this year. Two Boards (the Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards) breached their budget allocations in the last two years and their deficits currently amount cumulatively to £31.2 million.

Electroconvulsive Therapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what obligations there are on hospital staff in Northern Ireland who are involved in electroconvulsive therapy procedures to understand the calibration settings of ECT machines. [17560]

Mr. Woodward: Clinical staff, using an ECT machine to provide electro-convulsive therapy, are trained by an appropriately experienced consultant psychiatrist and subsequently use ECT machines only when deemed competent to do so by the consultant psychiatrist.

Freedom of Information

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many requests have been received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by each Government Department in the Province. [18431]

Angela E. Smith: The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister publishes statistics on the performance of the 11 Northern Ireland Departments on a quarterly basis. Similarly, figures for the Northern Ireland Office are included in the Department for Constitutional Affairs quarterly update for Whitehall Departments. The total number of requests received by each Department between 1 January 2005 and 30 June 2005 are set out in the following table. Figures for the third quarter, 1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005, should be available towards the end of the year.

Department	Number of requests received[1]
Agriculture and Rural Development	131
Culture, Arts and Leisure	548
Education	75
Employment and Learning	30
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	35
Finance and Personnel	212
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	65
Environment	419
Regional Development	208
Social Development	86
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	48
Northern Ireland Office	110

[1] Figures include requests made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

[2] DCAL figure includes requests made to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the costs which have resulted from requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [18432]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not collected routinely and could be obtained at only disproportionate cost.

G8 Summit (Scotland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers of the Police Service of Northern Ireland were assigned to operational duties relating to the recent G8 summit in Scotland. [19553]

Mr. Woodward: Three officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland provided assistance by performing operational planning duty. A further two officers attended as observers.

GPs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vacancies for general practitioners there are in the Province. [20048]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Harbour Investment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has invested in *(a)* Portavogie Harbour, *(b)* Kilkeel Harbour and *(c)* Ardglass Harbour in each of the past three years. [20159]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority is the non-departmental public body that has responsibility for the improvement, management and maintenance of the three Northern Ireland fishery harbours at Portavogie, Kilkeel and Ardglass.

Capital development projects at the three harbours (ie projects which relate to development rather than routine maintenance) have been funded at a rate of 100 per cent. through the authority by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development under the Structural Funds programme 'Building Sustainable Prosperity' (BSP) and the Re-investment and Reform Initiative (RRI).

The total amounts invested by way of awards of grant aid in *(a)* Portavogie Harbour, *(b)* Kilkeel Harbour, and *(c)* Ardglass Harbour in each of the past three years are as set out in the following table.

£

Harbour	BSP	RRI
Portavogie		
2002–03	100,675.26	—
2003–04	—	—
2004–05	796,415	—
Kilkeel		
2002–03	284,104.24	4,086,047
2003–04	—	—
2004–05	1,182,063	—
Ardglass		
2002–03	148,882.04	—
2003–04	—	—
2004–05	—	—
Composite award (all three ports)		
2002–03	—	—
2003–04	—	—
2004–05	26,921	—
Total	2,539,060.54	4,086,047

Health Service Managers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* managers and *(b)* senior managers there are within the health service in the Province. [20046]

Mr. Woodward: Figures showing the number of manager/senior manager staff working in the HPSS are detailed in the following table. The number of manager/ senior manager staff are a sub-set of the administration and clerical terms and condition group. It was not possible to provide a specific split between the manager and senior manager grades due to the complexity of administration ad clerical grades and more specifically the lack of an agreed definition for manager and senior manager posts.

Number of managers/senior managers employed within the NI HPSS as at March 2005

	Managers/senior managers
Headcount	2,402
Whole-time equivalent	2,334.42

Note:
The figures quoted for manager/senior manager include senior executives and board members. These figures exclude administration and clerical staff that may have lower level supervisory duties.
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* managers and *(b)* senior managers there were in the health service in the Province in 1997. [20064]

Mr. Woodward: Figures showing the number of manager/senior manager staff working in the HPSS are detailed in the following table. The number of manager/ senior manager staff are a sub-set of the administration and clerical terms and condition group. It was not possible to provide a specific split between the manager and senior manager grades due to the complexity of administration and clerical grades and more specifically the lack of an agreed definition for manager and senior manager posts.

Number of managers/senior managers employed within the NI HPSS as at March 1997

	Manager/senior manager
Headcount	1,211
Whole-time equivalent	1,191.4

Note:
The figures quoted for manager/senior manager include senior executives and board members. These figures exclude administration and clerical staff that may have lower level supervisory duties.
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Homelessness

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were deemed homeless under the homeless legislation in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [20302]

Mr. Hanson: During the last three financial years (1 April to 31 March each year) the information requested is as follows:

	Number
2002–03	8,580
2003–04	8,594
2004–05	8,470

Hospital Consultants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage change in whole-time equivalent hospital consultants in the Province since 1997. [20052]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Percentage increase in whole-time equivalent (WTE) hospital consultants employed within the NI HPSS between March 1997 and March 2005

	Hospital consultants
March 1997	601.1
March 2005	909.6
Percentage change	51.3

Note:
Consultant figures include medical and dental consultants.
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Household Waste (Recycling)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of household waste each council in Northern Ireland recycled in the last period for which figures are available. [19585]

Angela E. Smith: The following table provides details of household recycling rates as a percentage of household waste for 2004–05:

Table 1: Household recycling rates for 2004–05

District Council	*Household waste recycled as a percentage of total household waste for 2004–05*
Antrim Borough Council	38.4
Ards Borough Council	20.4
Armagh City And District Council	23.3
Ballymena Borough Council	23.4
Ballymoney Borough Council	24.0
Banbridge District Council	39.2
Belfast City Council	8.9
Carrickfergus Borough Council	17.2
Castlereagh Borough Council	22.2
Coleraine Borough Council	18.6
Cookstown District Council	20.1
Craigavon Borough Council	23.3
Derry City Council	13.7
Down District Council	19.2
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	20.1
Fermanagh District Council	21.0
Larne Borough Council	16.5
Limavady Borough Council	27.3
Lisburn City Council	12.3
Magherafelt District Council	31.4
Moyle District Council	11.3
Newry and Mourne District Council	20.0
Newtownabbey Borough Council	19.9
North Down Borough Council	17.2
Omagh District Council	19.6
Strabane District Council	17.3
Northern Ireland	19.9

Housing Waiting Lists

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were on the waiting list for a housing transfer in each housing executive district in Northern Ireland as of 1 October 2005; and how many of these people have been waiting *(a)* less than one month, *(b)* two to six months, *(c)* six to 12 months, *(d)* 12 to 18 months and *(e)* longer than 18 months. [20646]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows.

Numbers of transfer applicants the Housing Executive waiting list by district office and length of time on the list at 1 October 2005

	< 1 month	1 and < 2 month	2 and < 6 month	6 and < 12 month	12 and < 18 month	18 month or more	Total
Antrim	2	15	48	42	27	103	237
Armagh	—	4	23	30	16	65	138
Ballycastle	—	—	13	11	9	35	68
Ballymena	10	25	67	50	48	163	363
Ballymoney	—	5	17	13	14	54	103
Banbridge	3	6	24	19	14	77	143
Bangor	2	12	62	61	43	188	368
Belfast 1	5	17	54	42	34	185	337
Belfast 2	4	31	82	92	51	301	561
Belfast 3	3	17	55	77	58	199	409
Belfast 4	2	15	69	55	77	188	406
Belfast 5	7	17	83	76	56	251	490
Belfast 6	6	20	78	107	80	205	496
Belfast 7	5	19	84	87	65	286	546
Carrickfergus	2	8	37	40	28	102	217
Castlereagh	6	24	58	58	32	186	364
Coleraine	1	16	60	52	45	151	325
Collon Terrace	5	7	51	69	49	171	352
Cookstown	—	—	9	13	10	27	59
Downpatrick	3	12	50	39	30	130	264
Dungannon		7	21	37	20	66	151
Fermanagh		7	33	42	21	98	201
Larne	2	6	36	28	13	67	152
Limavady	2	5	22	14	12	34	89
Lisburn Antrim Street	7	21	95	83	42	211	459
Lisburn Dairyfarm	4	18	55	51	28	71	227
Lurgan Brownlow	4	11	40	51	24	97	227
Magherafelt	2	10	26	33	19	79	169
Newry	1	13	52	41	36	129	272
Newtownabbey 1	1	15	41	45	45	138	285
Newtownabbey 2	1	6	38	40	17	83	185
Newtownards	1	20	74	66	59	214	434
Omagh	1	7	20	25	12	73	138
Portadown	1	5	17	9	14	46	92
Strabane	3	11	49	56	37	94	250
Waterloo Place	3	10	39	57	41	168	318
Waterside	1	14	33	50	17	73	188
Total	109	456	1,715	1,761	1,243	4,808	10,083

Identification Parades

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many identification parades have taken place in each Police Service of Northern Ireland district command in Northern Ireland in the last three years. [19465]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the table. All identification parades in Northern Ireland take place at the identification suite at Donegall Pass. The figures provided show the number of identification parades conducted for each District Command Unit (DCU) for the period in question.

DCU	2002	2003	2004	2005 to date
North Belfast	34	25	55	106
East Belfast	19	18	35	17
West Belfast	41	37	46	26
South Belfast	79	54	64	79
Castlereagh	11	4	13	12
Newtownabbey	11	30	25	51
Carrickfergus	6	1	2	2
Larne	2	2	7	1
Antrim	6	13	8	18
Ballymena	8	20	11	23
Moyle	1	4	4	0
Ballymoney	1	0	3	2
Coleraine	18	15	8	21
Limavady	6	4	5	7
Magherafelt	1	14	7	1
Foyle	27	20	17	19
Strabane	4	10	6	2
Cookstown	5	8	16	8
Omagh	25	6	12	8
Dungannon and South Tyrone	15	1	9	12
Fermanagh	11	19	17	6
Armagh	9	4	2	2
Craigavon	4	11	13	21
Newry and Mourne	8	14	8	5
Banbridge	5	5	11	7
Down	20	16	51	7
Lisburn	29	35	67	58
Ards	12	21	15	4
North Down	7	13	21	9

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many cases an identification parade has been the evidence on which a prosecution has been taken to court in each of the last three years. [19466]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Illegal Motor Fuel

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many roadside tests were carried out on motor vehicles to test for illegal petrol and diesel in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years in *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural regions. [19458]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The total number of roadside challenges of motor vehicles by HM Revenue and Customs for tests on the fuel being used is just one element of an integrated antifraud strategy on oils. The figures requested are contained in the table.

These figures only relate to challenges made by H.M. Revenue and Customs (ex HM Customs and Excise) and do not include any challenges made by other enforcement agencies, which may have included a sight test of the vehicles fuel as part of their checks.

	Challenges
1999–2000	1,355
2000–01	5,736
2001–02	1,589
2002–03	4,077
2003–04	13,144

It is not possible to split this into urban or rural regions, as these data were not recorded.

Infant Schools

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average infant school class size has been in each year since 1998; and what the total number of infant school pupils was in each year. [19582]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

	Number of year 1–year 4 pupils	*Average class size for year 1–year 4 pupils* [1]
1998–99	99,839	23.6
1999–2000	97,789	23.3
2000–01	95,195	23.2
2001–02	94,815	23.0
2002–03	93,980	22.9
2003–04	93,377	22.8
2004–05	92,406	22.8

[1] Any composite class with pupils in years 5, 6 or 7 has been excluded.

Legal Gun Dealers/Clubs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many legal gun dealers there are in Northern Ireland; and if he will list them. [19463]

Mr. Woodward: The following information has been supplied by the PSNI:

There are 132 gun dealers listed on our records.

Firearms Dealers

Business Name

A Blue Ltd.
A C J Engineering
A. J. S. Repairs
Ace Products (Belfast) Ltd.
Agnew, J.A & Co
Air Tec
Anderson, C.A. & Co
Ashley Gun Sales & Repairs
Bailie, E.
Ballycarrickmaddy Shooting School
Beattie, T & Son
Bloomfield Guns & Tackle
Boston Outdoor Sports
Braddell, Joseph & Son Ltd.
Brown, S.W.
Burke, H & Sons Ltd.
C C Shooting Supplies
C F Beattie & Son (F'arm & Amm)
Cahoon Brothers
Carlisle, R & R
Carlisle, T. J.
Carson, R. J. K.
Cassells, E.J. & Son
Coburn, J& Son Ltd.
Conway Bros. (Vision) Ltd.
Coote's (Builders Merchants) Ltd.
Costcutters
Cottage Guns & Tackle
Country Sports
Country Sports & Tackle
Craig, B& Co. Ltd.
Crawford, R & Co.
Daly's, M.
Dennett Game Services
Derry Gonnelly Autos
Devlin Countryside Supplies
Dickson, J.J.
Divers Guns & Tackle
Dowler, F. Ltd.
Dunhill Sports Supplies
Fernvale Country Sports
Field & Stream
Firearms Unlimited
Firefly
Fyffe, W. D.
Glass, T. R. G.
Graham, J. & Sons
Graham, R & Sons
Greer, T & Son
Groggan Guns & Country Store
Guns & Tackle
Harkin, K. G.
Harpur, N. C.
Holden Agricultural Ltd.
Hollow Farm Shooting Grounds

Home, Field & Stream
Houston's Country Gear
Hughes, M.T.
Hutchinson's
Irwin, S. D.
Johnston, S
Jones, W.
Kyle, P. E.
Kyle, W. J. Hardware
Lakeview Guns & Tackle
Lawrence, J.A.
Leisure & Tackle
Limavady Hardware Co.
Lock, Stock & Barrel
Lough Shore Shooting Supplies
Lough, Stock & Barrel
Loughview Guns & Ammo
Lutton, A
Lutton's Gun Repairs
Magowan, R
Martin, T. M. & Son
Maryland Country Sports
Maurice Allen Chainsaws
Mawhinney, D
Mcclimond, T
Mcconnell (Equipment) Ltd.
Mckendry, R
Mckeown, E.J.M. (Agric. & Build. Merchant)
McKerr Fieldsports
McVey Brothers
Melvin Tackle
Mid Ulster Industries
Millar, Desmond & Son
Monteith, A. A. & Sons
Moyallen Countryman
MPL Guns & Ammo
Mullen's Pet & Shooting Supplies
Murphy, W.M.
Murphy, J
Nelson's Sports Centre
Nicholas, C. J. & Sons
North Antrim Game Services
O'Neill's Country Sports
Orchard Guns
Palmer, D. H.
Palmer, R.
R R Motorcycles & Marine
R. F. D. Ltd.
Rankin, Joseph
Riverdale Sports
Robin Minnis Sports
Rod & Gun
Rod 'N' Line
Sammy's Shooting Supplies
Scott, T. J.
Sinclair, J. N. & Sons
Smyth, J.C. Sports Spec.'s
Smyth's Country Sports
Somerville, R.W.
Sports Goods & Footwear
Stewart & Gibson Ltd.
Stewart & James
Stinson The Saddler
Stringer, W
Tannyoky Guns & Ammo
Thales Air Defence Ltd.
The Belfast Firearms Company
The Countryman
The Gunshop
The Trading Post
Trap & Field Sports
Trap & Tackle
Valley Leisure & Rural Supplies
Walther Ireland
Willis Hardware & Trailers
Workman Hardware
Young Guns

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list legal *(a)* gun clubs and *(b)* ranges in Northern Ireland. [19464]

Mr. Woodward: The following information has been supplied by the PSNI.

There are 55 authorised gun clubs and 39 authorised ranges in Northern Ireland. These are listed as follows. Where ranges comprise more than one firing range, this is identified in the table.

Authorised Clubs (at 19 October 2005)

Area 17 Air Pistol Club
Ballymena Rifle & Pistol Club
Bangor & District Small Bore Rifle Club
Bangor Gram. Sch. Com. Cadet Force Air Rifle Club
Belfast Harbour Police Rifle Club
Belfast Home Guard Rifle Club
Belfast Royal Academy Rifle Club—2390 Squadron ATC
Braken Projectile Club
Bready Air Rifle Club
Campbell College, C.C.F Rifle Club
Carrowdore & District Shooting & Recreation Club
City of Derry Rifle & Pistol Club
Clandeboye, Bangor & District U.S.C. Rifle & Pistol Club
Co Londonderry 'XB' Rifle & Pistol Club
Comber Rifle Club
Creevedonnell Air Rifle Club
Culnady Air Rifle Club
Downpatrick Rifle Club
Downshire Rifle Clu
Dungannon Rifle & Pistol Club
Dunnyboe Target Club
East Antrim Rifle & Pistol Club
Ex-Services Pistol & Rifle Club
Fortwilliam Home Guard Rifle & Pistol Club
Kells Rifle & Pistol Club
Killylea Air Rifle Club
Kirlish Rifle & Pistol Club
Laghey Small Bore Rifle & Pistol Club

Langford Lodge Sports Club
Leopold Street Rifle Club
Lisnalea Rod & Gun Club
Loughbrickland Small Bore Rifle Club
Maralin Rifle Club
Michelin Athletic Pistol & Rifle Club
Mid Antrim Rifle & Pistol Club
Moneymore Air Rifle Club
Mowillian Air Rifle Club
2nd (NI) Battalion Army Cadet Force Rifle Club
N.I. Target Sports Association
North Antrim Small Bore Rifle & Pistol Club
Omagh & District U.S.C.A Rifle Club
Omagh Scout Group Rifle Club
Orritor Rifle Club
P.S.N.I. Rifle & Pistol Club
Rockport Shooting Club
Roe Valley Rifle Club
Roe Valley Target Club
Royal School Armagh Rifle Club
Royal School Dungannon Rifle Club
Seskinore Harriers Air Pistol Club
Sherrygroom Rifle & Pistol Club
Shorts Rifle & Pistol Club
Strangford Lough W'Fowling Cons. Ass. Air Rifle Club
Ulster Rifle Association
Western Area Medical Target Shooting Club

Name of club	*Location of range*
Bangor Grammar School Combined Cadet Force Air Rifle Club	Bangor Grammar School, 13 College Avenue, Bangor, BT20 5HJ
Culnady Air Rifle Club	Culnady Orange Hall, Culnady Road, Upperlands, Maghera
Dungannon Shooting Federation Club	Dungannon Leisure Centre, Circular Road (Basement, rear car park)
Bangor & District Small Bore Rifle Club	Castle Park, Valentine Road, Bangor
Dungannon Royal School Rifle Club	Dungannon Royal School Grounds
Rockport School Air Rifle Club	Rockport School, Craigavad, Holywood BT180DD
Killylea Air Gun Club	Cooey Orange Hall, Kennedies Road, Killylea, Co Armagh
Mowillian Air Rifle Club	Moneymore, Co Londonderry
Area 17 Air Pistol Club	Unit 44, Dennisons Industrial Estate, Mill Road, Ballyclare
Lisnalea Rod & Gun Club Shooting Range	Entrance to disused railway tunnel, Corrinare Road, Loughgilly, Markethill
Foyle & Londonderry College	Northland Road, Londonderry
County Londonderry XB Rifle Club	Moneyshanare, Tobermore
Comber Rifle Club	17 Railway Street, Comber BT23 5HG (2 × indoor ranges—1 × first floor—1 × ground floor) Ballygraffan Road, Comber BT23 5SU (2 × ranges—1 × indoor—1 × outdoor)
North Antrim Small Bore Rifle Club	Nissen Hut at Bellisle Road, Carncullagh Upper, Dervock, Ballymoney (2 × ranges)
Bready Air Rifle Club	Ballydonaghy, Clougher, Strabane 69 Dunnalong Road, Bready, Strabane
Private Range	Garage at 612 Saintfield Road, Carryduff, Belfast BT8 8BL
Langford Lodge Sports Club	Unit 4, Langford Lodge Industrial Estate, Largy Road, Crumlin
Sherrygroom Rifle & Pistol Club	Above a barn at Dunnahenry Road, Stewartstown
Roe Valley Rifle Club	Farm yard at Tullyarmon, Limavady
Seskinore Harriers Air Pistol Club	Riding for Disabled Association, Deverney Road, Arvalee, Omagh
Fortwilliam (Home Guard) Rifle & Pistol Club	The Old Abattoir, Duncrue Pass, Belfast
Moneymore Air Rifle Club	Orange Hall, Main Street, Moneymore, Co Londonderry
Carrowdore & District Shooting & Recreation Club	Abbey Road, Carrowdore, Co Down (3 × ranges—2 × indoor—7 × outdoor)
Ballymena Rifle & Pistol Club	Loan Hill, Ballyconnelly Road, Cullybackey, Co Antrim (2 × ranges)
Kells Rifle & Pistol Club	78 Fernisky Road, Kells, Ballymena (2 × ranges—1 × indoor—1 × outdoor)
Downshire Rifle Club	Moira Road, Hillsborough (2 × ranges—1 × indoor—1 × outdoor)
Omagh Boy Scouts Rifle Club	Campsie Road, Omagh
Clandeboye Bangor & USC Rifle & Pistol Club	The Borough Gymnasium, Hamilton Road, Bangor, Co Down
Laghey Rifle & Pistol Club	21A Killyneill Court, Dungannon BT71 6BN
Loughbrickland Rifle Club	McBride's Corner, Moneyslane, Ballyward, Banbridge, Co Down
Duke of Abercorn Estate Range	Baronscourt, Newtownstewart, Co Tyrone
Desertmartin Air Rifle Club	The Orange Hall, Desertmartin
Omagh & District USCA Rifle Club	Colebrooke Estate, Brookeborough, Co Fermanagh (1 × outdoor) Gola, Lisbellaw, Co Fermanagh (1 x indoor)
Mid Antrim Pony Club	Barn at 125 Ahoghill Road, Randalstown
Strangford Lough Wildfowlers	Glenvale, Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards
HMP Weapon Training Range	NIPS, HMP Maghaberry, Lisburn, Co Antrim
East Antrim Rifle & Pistol Club	23A Sawmill Road, Ballyclare, Co Antrim (3 × ranges—2 × indoor—1 × outdoor)
Creevedonnell Air Rifle Club	Cumber Church Hall, Cregg Road, Claudy, Co Londonderry (1 × indoor) Curryfree Road, Curryfree, Co Londonderry (1 × indoor)
Dungannon Rifle & Pistol Club	Disused sandpit at 408 Annaginny Road, Newmills, Dungannon (4 × ranges)

Liver Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time was that patients in the Province waited for treatment for liver cancer in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20065]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for cancer treatment is not collected centrally.

Negligence Claims

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many clinical negligence claims there have been against each health trust in the Province in each of the last three years. [20049]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

NHS Clinical Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage change in whole-time equivalent NHS clinical staff in the Province since 1997. [20051]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the table. Clinical staff are those who provide a direct service to patients. Therefore, clinical staff within the HPSS includes the following terms and condition groups: nursing, midwifery and health visiting, social services, professional and technical, medical and dental and ambulance staff. Clinical staff consist of those who are professionally qualified and those staff working in direct support of professionally qualified clinical staff.

Percentage increase in whole-time equivalent (WTE) of clinical staff, employed within the NI HPSS between March 1997 and March 2005

	Clinical Staff (WTE)
March 1997	24,769.35
March 2005	31,621.99
Percentage change	27.7

Source:
Human Resource Management System

NHS Pension Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when sessional general practitioners in the Province will be able to join the NHS pension scheme. [20068]

Mr. Woodward: Amending regulations which will open the HPSS superannuation scheme to sessional general practitioners in Northern Ireland are scheduled to be introduced in December 2005.

These regulations will provide for both backdated and future scheme membership for sessional general practitioners from the date they are introduced.

The Department's HPSS Superannuation Branch has recently issued a letter to sessional general practitioners informing them of this.

Non-clinical Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the annual spending was on administrative and non-clinical staff within the health service in the Province in each of the last two years. [20045]

Mr. Woodward: Expenditure on administrative and non-clinical staff was £212 million in 2002–03, and £236 million in 2003–04. The figures for 2004–05 are not yet available.

Non-consultant Hospital Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage change in whole-time equivalent non-consultant hospital doctors in the Province since 1997. [20053]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Percentage increase in whole-time equivalent non-consultant hospital doctors employed within the NI HPSS between March 1997 and March 2005

	Non-consultant hospital doctors (wte)
March 1997	1,267.33
March 2005	1,857.63
Percentage change	46.6

Note:
Non-consultant hospital doctor figures include both medical and dental staff.
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Northern Bank Robbery

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been *(a)* questioned, *(b)* arrested and *(c)* detained in connection with the Northern bank robbery. [19468]

Mr. Woodward: The investigation into the Northern bank robbery is ongoing. To date no-one has been arrested or detained and subsequently interviewed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland in relation to the robbery.

PSNI are working closely with An Garda Síochána on a number of aspects of the investigation into the Northern bank robbery. Progress has been made, and the Garda Commissioner has stated publicly that a large quantity of money recovered in raids in Cork was stolen from the Northern bank. PSNI are fully committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice and are confident of a successful outcome to the investigation.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers are working on the Northern Bank robbery case. [19469]

Mr. Woodward: The investigation into the Northern Bank robbery is ongoing and a dedicated team of detectives have been allocated to the case and are working closely with their counterparts in An Garda Síochána. PSNI are fully committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice and additional resources can be called upon as the inquiry evolves.

The allocation of police staff resources is a matter for the Chief Constable.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been recovered to date from the Northern Bank robbery. [19566]

Mr. Woodward: The investigation into the Northern Bank robbery is ongoing. To date the Police Service of Northern Ireland has recovered £50,000 of the proceeds from the Northern Bank robbery. In addition An Garda Síochána has recovered over £2.4 million which they believe to be from the Northern Bank robbery.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money the most recent change of notes after the Northern Bank robbery cost the Northern Bank to implement. [19567]

Mr. Woodward: It is not known precisely what costs were incurred by the Northern Bank to change its bank notes in the aftermath of the robbery of the bank in December. The hon. Member may wish to raise this issue with the chief executive of the Northern Bank.

The Bank's decision to withdraw the old bank notes and replace them with notes of a different colour and design was warmly welcomed by the then Secretary of State as it significantly reduced the value of the robbery to the perpetrators and increased the logistical barriers for those responsible to launder the stolen money.

Nurses

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage change in whole-time equivalent qualified nurses in the Province since 1997. [20043]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Percentage increase in whole-time equivalent (WTE) qualified nurses employed within the NI HPSS between March 1997 and March 2005

	Qualified Nurses (WTE)
March 1997	11,508.3
March 2005	13,344.5
Percentage change	16.0

Notes:
Qualified nurses include midwives and health visitors.
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Ovarian Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time was that patients in the Province waited for treatment for ovarian cancer in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20066]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for cancer treatment is not collected centrally.

Police Officer Numbers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers there were in Northern Ireland on 1 September *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 1998 and *(c)* 2005, broken down by (i) regular, (ii) full-time reserve and (iii) part-time reserve. [19554]

Mr. Woodward: The relevant figures are listed in the following table. The figures for regulars do not include secondments, but do include student officers.

Date	*Regulars*	*Full-time reserve*	*Part-time reserve and constables part-time*
30 September 1997	8,470	2,975	1,362
30 September 1998	8,446	2,980	1,255
30 September 2005	7,461	1,173	902

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Roman Catholics and *(b)* Protestants qualified for the merit pool of suitably qualified candidates on each recruitment exercise for new constables by the Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the last three years, but were not appointed. [19186]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that in the last three years the merit pool breakdown has been as follows:

		Merit pool		*Not appointed*	
Campaign	*Month/Year*	*Catholic*	*Non-Catholic*	*Catholic*	*Non-Catholic*
5	March 2003	281	760	[1]131	[1]610
6	September 2003	211	656	[1]61	[1]506
7	March 2004	180	578	[1]47	[1]445
8	September 2004	308	807	[1]198	[1]697
9	March 2005	[2]	—	[2]	—
10	September 2005	[2]	—	—	—

[1] Appointments are still being made from competitions five through to eight and these figures are based upon the projected number of final appointments.
[2] Pool not yet formed.

In total, competitions five through to eight have seen 3,781 candidates who have been classified as suitably qualified. It is projected that only 1,086 appointments will be made from these competitions, and as such it is inevitable that a large number of qualified candidates (an estimated 2,695) will be rejected.

The vast majority of these candidates, however, will be affected in absolutely no way by the 50:50 measures. It is estimated only 288 will actually be rejected because of these temporary provisions. The remaining number will be rejected regardless of the 50/50 provisions and simply because demand to join PSNI is so high.

With non-Catholics representing a higher proportion of applications, it is inevitable that there will be a higher proportion of non-Catholics who reach the pool of suitably qualified applicants, and are not then appointed.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the cost of Police Service of Northern Ireland recruitment exercises for each of the last three years. [19187]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the figures spent on regular police trainee recruitment has been as follows:

Financial year	*Annual cost (£)*
2002–03	3,794,761
2003–04	4,553,610
2004–05	5,071,988

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many recruitment exercises have been carried out by the Police Service of Northern Ireland for new constables in each of the last three years. [19188]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that there have been a total of six campaigns administered in the last three years. A total of 10 have taken place since March 2001.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new Police Service of Northern Ireland constables were appointed in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [19189]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the following numbers have been appointed over the last three years:

Financial year	*Number appointed*
2002–03	414
2003–04	528
2004–05	531

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the size of the merit pool was for recruitment exercises carried out by the Police Service of Northern Ireland for new constables in each of the last three years. [19330]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the following numbers have reached the merit pool of suitably qualified candidates:

Month/year	*Campaign*	*Merit pool: total*
March 2003	5	1,041
September 2003	6	867
March 2004	7	758
September 2004	8	1,115

Note:
Competitions nine and 10 are ongoing, with merit pools yet to be formed.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many regular Police Service of Northern Ireland *(a)* full-time reserve and *(b)* part-time reserve officers are on (i) long term sick leave and (ii) short term sick leave within East Belfast. [19575]

Mr. Woodward: As of the 19 October 2005, East Belfast DCU recorded the following sick absence details for regular, full-time reserve and part-time reserve officers:

11 regular officers on long-term sick absence (over 28 days)

10 regular officers on short-term sick absence (under 28 days)

1 full-time reserve on long term sick absence (over 28 days)

10 full-time reserve on short-term sick absence (under 28 days)

No part-time reserve constable recorded as sick

Police Stations (Closures)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the police stations on closure lists in each district in Northern Ireland. [19531]

Mr. Woodward: The following stations have been approved for closure by the Chief Constable and the Policing Board:

DCU	*Station*
Banbridge	Dromore
Coleraine	Castlerock
Cookstown	Moneymore
Down	Castlewellan
Dungannon and South Tyrone	Caledon
	Ballygawley
	Moy
Fermanagh	Ballinamallard
	Derrygonnelly
	Kinawley
	Lisbellaw
	Rosslea
	Tempo
Newry and Mourne	Ardglass
Strabane	Plumbridge

Primary Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils attended *(a)* state controlled, *(b)* Catholic maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [19943]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupils[1] in primary schools[2] in Northern Ireland

	Controlled schools	*Catholic maintained schools*	*Integrated[3] schools*
1995–96	89,214	89,213	2,965
1996–97	89,077	88,072	3,512
1997–98	87,969	86,345	3,809
1998–99	86,157	84,213	4,669
1999–2000	84,710	82,003	5,006
2000–01	83,529	80,059	5,159
2001–02	82,521	78,742	5,379
2002–03	80,981	77,233	5,557
2003–04	79,183	76,034	6,012
2004–05	77,799	74,849	6,392

[1] Figures relate to pupils in year 1—year 7 only.
[2] Data for pupils at 'other maintained' primary schools and at preparatory departments of voluntary grammar schools have been excluded.
[3] Includes both controlled integrated schools and grant maintained integrated schools.

Public Bodies (Appointments)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestant, *(b)* Roman Catholic and *(c)* non-determined appointees there have been to (i) the Child Support Agency in Northern Ireland, (ii) general service grades of the Civil Service in Northern Ireland and (iii) the

Northern Ireland Housing Executive in the last 12 months; and what percentage of appointees this represents in each case. [18497]

Angela E. Smith: Protestants and men are currently under-represented in positions in the administrative grades of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. To encourage applications from these groups advertisements for general service positions have included the following welcoming statement:

"As Protestants and men are currently known to be under-represented amongst applicants for employment in this grade in the NICS, applications from the Protestant section of the community and from men would be particularly welcome."

As part of current outreach measures, Recruitment Service attends careers events throughout Northern Ireland to encourage young people to consider a career in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Officials from Department of Finance and Personnel have also met careers teachers from a predominantly Protestant catchment area in an initiative to ensure that careers in NICS are perceived in a positive way by young Protestant school leavers and that applications received are representative of the entire community.

The following tables provide details of appointments for the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

Northern Ireland Civil Service

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Non-determined*		
General service grades	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Total*
Permanent	661	44	825	55	9	0.6	1,495
Temporary	161	45	190	53.5	4	1	355

Note:
(These are overall figures for NICS and include appointments to the Child Support Agency.)

Child Support Agency

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Non-determined*		
General service grades	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Total*
Permanent	80	36.5	138	63	1	0.4	219
Temporary	15	38.5	22	56.4	2	5	39

Note:
(These appointments, included in the table above, are identified as appointments to the Child Support Agency.)

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Non-determined*		
General service grades	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Total*
Appointees	119	39.3	145	47.8	39	12.9	303

Racially Motivated Crime

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted and sentenced for racially motivated crime in each year for which figures are held. [18059]

Mr. Hanson: The Government takes racially motivated crime very seriously. The Racial Equality Strategy, published on 19 July 2005, sets a framework to allow the Government to tackle the issues of racial inequality in Northern Ireland and to eradicate racism and hate crime. In addition, legislation was passed last year which enables aggravated penalties to be handed down by the courts on those whose crimes were motivated by hatred of a persons race.

The table outlines the number of racially motivated crimes cleared by the police in 2004–05 (first financial year for which data available). A breakdown by clearance type is provided which includes the number of crimes cleared by way of a charge or summons.

Crime clearance method 2004–05

	Number
Charge/summons	59
Caution/informed warning (including juvenile)	11
No further police action[1]	31
Total crimes cleared	101

[1] Includes cases where complainant declined to prosecute, or suspected offender is under the age of criminal responsibility or has died.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* hate crimes and *(b)* racially motivated crimes there have been within each district command unit in Northern Ireland over the last three years. [18019]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland will record any incident perceived to have been committed against any person or property on the grounds of a particular persons ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion or disability, whether it amounts to a crime or not. These incidents are commonly referred to as hate crimes and take many forms, including, verbal abuse, physical assault, intimidation and damage to property.

The tables provide statistics for racially motivated incidents and homophobic incidents. The statistics in relation to homophobic incidents are only available by District Command Unit for 2003–04 and 2004–05. The total figure for such incidents in 2002–03 was 35.

Computerised recording of incidents where the motivation is perceived to be on the grounds of an individual's particular religion, political opinion, or disability will be available from April 2005.

Number of homophobic incidents[1]—2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

District command unit	Homophobic incidents 2003–04	Homophobic incidents 2004–05
Urban region:		
North Belfast	13	27
South Belfast	15	28
East Belfast	4	6
West Belfast	0	4
Castlereagh	1	4
North Down	0	4
Newtownabbey	0	9
Antrim	0	4
Carrickfergus	1	1
Lisburn	11	5
Larne	0	2
Ards	0	0
Total for region	45	94
Rural region:		
Ballymena	1	3
Ballymoney	0	4
Coleraine	0	5
Limavady	0	3
Foyle	17	69
Moyle	0	1
Magherafelt	0	1
Strabane	0	2
Omagh	2	1
Fermanagh	1	3
Armagh	1	0
Banbridge	1	1
Craigavon	2	1
Cookstown	0	4
Down	0	1
Newry and Mourne	1	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	0	1
Total for region	26	102
		102
Overall total	71	196

[1] Homophobic incidents include attempted murder, physical assault, verbal abuse/threat, attack on home, attack on property, graffiti and written material.

Number of racial incidents[1]—2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

District command unit	Racial incidents 2002–03	Racial incidents 2003–04	Racial incidents 2004–05
Urban region:			
North Belfast	16	27	76
South Belfast	58	147	159
East Belfast	11	32	54
West Belfast	0	11	13
Castlereagh	8	10	12
North Down	17	18	19
Newtownabbey	18	18	15
Antrim	0	4	23
Carrickfergus	2	4	21
Lisburn	6	16	28
Larne	5	2	0
Ards	0	0	25
Total for region	141	289	445
Rural region:			
Ballymena	6	37	52
Ballymoney	2	3	8
Coleraine	3	7	22
Limavady	1	2	7
Foyle	5	12	40
Moyle	1	0	1
Magherafelt	0	1	9
Strabane	0	0	3
Omagh	2	2	6
Fermanagh	2	5	18
Armagh	4	14	14
Banbridge	0	2	1
Craigavon	35	31	79
Cookstown	14	11	16
Down	1	5	8
Newry and Mourne	2	11	15
Dungannon and South Tyrone	7	21	69
Total for region	85	164	368
Overall total	226	453	813

[1] Racial incidents include murder, physical assault, verbal abuse/threat, attack on home, attack on property, graffiti and written material.

Note:
A new method of recording these figures was introduced in 2004–05. The statistics issued by the Chief Constable are now aligned with Home Office practice and as a result the figures for 2004–05 are not directly comparable with the figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been prosecuted for racism in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [18237]

Mr. Woodward: Court prosecution data do not identify racism offences. The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not hold figures for the last five years. The table outlines the number of racially motivated crimes cleared by the police in 2004–05 (the first financial year for which data are available) and for the current financial year to date. A breakdown by clearance type is provided which includes the number of crimes cleared by way of a charge or summons.

Crime clearance method	1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	1 April 2005 to 31 August 2005[1]
Charge/summons	59	17
Caution/informed warning (including juvenile)	11	1
No further police action[2]	31	27
Total crimes cleared	101	45

[1] Part year.
[2] Includes cases where complainant declined to prosecute, and where the suspected offender is under the age of criminal responsibility or has died.

Rape

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of a rape charge in each of the last five years. [21244]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the table below and covers the period 1999 to 2003 (the latter being the most up-to-date data presently available).

Convictions for rape, assault with intent to rape and indecent assault: 1999–2003

	Rape	Assault with intent to rape	Indecent assault
1999	7	1	61
2000	9	1	88
2001	13	1	81
2002	10	0	55
2003	10	0	66

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many rapes there were in each of the Police Service of Northern Ireland district commands in each of the last five years. [21246]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows.

Rape offences recorded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Antrim	3	6	7	8	7
Ards	7	6	14	14	16
East Belfast	6	13	11	8	14
North Belfast	12	14	19	29	26
South Belfast	20	26	23	32	21
West Belfast	7	6	13	23	13
Carrickfergus	6	1	2	6	6
Castlereagh	4	11	8	5	2
Larne	6	6	9	8	11
Lisburn	8	12	18	24	21
Newtownabbey	3	7	9	10	18
North Down	11	13	8	19	11
Armagh	4	8	3	1	9
Banbridge	5	8	8	10	11
Ballymena	10	7	14	15	17
Ballymoney	1	0	3	4	4
Coleraine	3	8	16	12	9
Cookstown	2	6	4	3	3
Craigavon	20	19	18	19	17
Dungannon and South Tyrone	3	7	7	6	7
Down	7	6	17	10	9
Fermanagh	6	4	4	8	7
Foyle	27	25	43	31	39
Limavady	2	6	6	10	10
Magherafelt	2	6	6	4	4
Moyle	4	3	4	4	2
Newry and Mourne	6	8	7	16	12
Omagh	10	5	10	5	11
Strabane	4	5	6	10	10
Total	209	252	317	354	347

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of rape were reported in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [21625]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not record statistics by parliamentary constituencies, rather by district command unit. The following table provides the information requested in the format available for the period 2004–05.

Rape offences recorded by the Police Service of Northern Ireland

District command unit	2004–05
Antrim	7
Ards	16
East Belfast	14
North Belfast	26
South Belfast	21
West Belfast	13
Carrickfergus	6
Castlereagh	2
Larne	11
Lisburn	21
Newtownabbey	18
North Down	11
Armagh	9
Banbridge	11
Ballymena	17
Ballymoney	4
Coleraine	9
Cookstown	3
Craigavon	17
Dungannon and South Tyrone	7
Down	9
Fermanagh	7
Foyle	39
Limavady	10
Magherafelt	4
Moyle	2
Newry and Mourne	12
Omagh	11
Strabane	10
Total for Northern Ireland	347

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Road Traffic Officers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many road traffic officers are stationed in each Police Service of Northern Ireland district. [19576]

Mr. Woodward: Roads Policing Officers are attached to the Regional Operational Command Units (OCU), not District Command Units (DCU).

These officers are deployed across all DCUs on an intelligence led basis to support DCUs in policing the roads, with the primary aim of reducing the number of persons killed or seriously injured.

The numbers attached to each OCU are:

	Full-time equivalents
Rural Region OCU	133.75
Urban Region OCU	117.75

School Transport

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on transport provided for children travelling to and from each school in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [19577]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is not held in respect of individual schools. However in the 2004–05 financial year a total of £64 million was spent on school transport. The expenditure in each Board area was as follows:

Board area	£ million
Belfast	4.425
North-Eastern	16.806
South-Eastern	13.285
Southern	16.367
Western	13.167
Total	64.05

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many school children use school funded transport to travel to and from maintained schools. [19578]

Angela E. Smith: The most recent figures available from Education and Library Boards for the 2004–05 academic year indicate that a total of 97,791 pupils were eligible for transport assistance. The breakdown of providers is:

	Number
Translink	53,134
ELB fleet	27,880
Privately operated services	16,777
Total	97,791

Seat Belts

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum (i) fine and (ii) penalty points issued for not wearing a seat belt in Northern Ireland. [19452]

Mr. Woodward: Failure to wear a seatbelt is in the main dealt with by issue of a Non-Endorsable Fixed Penalty Notice, attracting a fine of £30. Should the recipient opt to have the matter heard at court, the maximum possible fine is £500. These fines do not attract penalty points.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were stopped for not wearing their seat belts, in each of the last three years, broken down by district; and which type of fine was imposed upon each individual. [19453]

Mr. Woodward: An overall figure for the number of people stopped is not available as the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not maintain a record of those who were warned or given advice. Enforcement activity in respect of failure to wear seatbelts is largely by way of non-endorsable fixed penalty notices and figures in relation to this are provided in the following tables. Figures relating to prosecutions for failure to wear a seatbelt are not available for 2002 and 2003, however I can confirm that the number of prosecutions in 2004 was 1,756.

Number of fixed penalty notices 2002

Offence type	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (front)*	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (rear)*	*Driving passenger car with unrestrained child under 12 years.*	*Failing to wear seatbelt*	*Total fixed penalty notices issued*
District Command Unit					
Urban region					
Antrim	5	5	6	96	112
Ards	4	9	3	426	442
East Belfast	2	5	—	72	79
North Belfast	1	7	1	125	134
South Belfast	3	4	2	77	86
West Belfast	2	12	4	260	278
Carrickfergus	3	1	1	31	36
Castlereagh	1	2	1	136	140
Larne	2	7	1	111	121
Lisburn	1	5	5	135	146
Newtownabbey	2	2	—	79	83
North Down	—	—	—	70	70
Total for urban Region					1,727
Rural region					
Armagh	16	15	—	263	294
Banbridge	8	17	3	368	396
Ballymena	5	20	3	519	547
Ballymoney	5	5	1	152	163
Coleraine	3	7	1	202	213
Cookstown	11	13	2	243	269
Craigavon	30	158	14	2,354	2,556
Dungannon and South Tyrone	16	25	4	611	656
Down	1	7	1	285	294
Fermanagh	7	11	3	257	278
Foyle	21	46	6	870	943
Limavady	6	7	—	194	207
Magherafelt	6	7	1	243	257
Moyle	—	—	—	7	7
Newry and Mourne	10	31	1	464	506
Omagh	12	9	2	349	372
Strabane	1	6	2	110	119
Total for rural region					8,077
Total fixed penalty notices issued					9,804

Number of fixed penalty notices 2003

Offence type	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (front)*	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (rear)*	*Driving passenger car with unrestrained child under 12 years*	*Failing to wear seatbelt*	*Total fixed penalty notices issued*
District Command Unit					
Urban region					
Antrim	9	19	4	615	647
Ards	15	16	4	554	589
East Belfast	6	16	2	367	391
North Belfast	2	13	8	319	342
South Belfast	3	8	2	30	43
West Belfast	7	42	10	813	872
Carrickfergus	2	2	1	79	84
Castlereagh	8	17	3	986	1,014
Larne	3	4	2	254	263
Lisburn	3	11	4	485	503
Newtownabbey	8	8	3	238	257
North Down	1	7	—	311	319
Total for urban region					5,324
Rural region					
Armagh	14	23	3	548	588
Banbridge	5	13	2	401	421
Ballymena	14	37	7	2,019	2,077
Ballymoney	19	18	1	517	555
Coleraine	14	21	3	452	490
Cookstown	5	17	12	501	535
Craigavon	40	116	5	2,260	2,421
Dungannon and South Tyrone	10	21	8	682	721
Down	11	10	7	545	573
Fermanagh	13	21	2	704	740
Foyle	21	29	3	1,303	1,356
Limavady	6	8	5	480	499
Magherafelt	7	5	1	347	360
Moyle	2	6	1	99	108
Newry and Mourne	6	31	—	449	486
Omagh	11	23	1	539	574
Strabane	9	13	2	337	361
Total for rural region					12,865
Total fixed penalty notices issued					18,189

Number of fixed penalty notices 2004

Offence type	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (front)*	*Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (rear)*	*Driving passenger car with unrestrained child under 12 years*	*Failing to wear seatbelt*	*Total fixed penalty notices issued*
District Command Unit					
Urban region					
Antrim	5	18	1	665	689
Ards	3	15	2	472	492
East Belfast	9	22	1	632	664
North Belfast	7	13	6	354	380
South Belfast	13	25	4	1,132	1,174
West Belfast	12	45	5	660	722
Carrickfergus	5	11	3	120	139
Castlereagh	6	15	3	848	872
Larne	2	14	—	395	411
Lisburn	10	20	1	1,057	1,088
Newtownabbey	9	23	5	529	566
North Down	3	7	1	504	515
Total for Urban Region					7,712
Rural region					
Armagh	28	36	1	1,003	1,068
Banbridge	3	14	4	374	395
Ballymena	15	30	9	1,313	1,367
Ballymoney	12	10	1	422	445
Coleraine	8	21	6	655	690
Cookstown	19	20	6	498	543
Craigavon	27	82	11	1,952	2,072
Dungannon and South Tyrone	13	26	4	815	858

Number of fixed penalty notices 2004

Offence type	Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (front)	Carrying child under 14 years without seatbelt (rear)	Driving passenger car with unrestrained child under 12 years	Failing to wear seatbelt	Total fixed penalty notices issued
Down	10	28	1	734	773
Fermanagh	7	14	4	336	361
Foyle	19	49	2	1,521	1,591
Limavady	6	17	1	539	563
Magherafelt	8	11	4	531	554
Moyle	6	5	—	127	138
Newry and Mourne	25	42	7	935	1,009
Omagh	14	19	6	520	559
Strabane	7	9		378	394
Total for rural region					13,380
Total fixed penalty notices issued					21,092

Sexual Assaults

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* rape and *(b)* sexual assault incidents were recorded in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [19462]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the table.

	Crime type		
	Rape	Attempted rape	Indecent assault
2000–01	209	23	663
2001–02	252	40	677
2002–03	317	40	633
2003–04	354	41	834
2004–05	347	33	746

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions for (i) rape, (ii) assault with intent to rape and (iii) indecent assault took place in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [19523]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides statistics on the number of prosecutions and convictions for rape, assault with intent to rape and indecent assault during the period 1999 to 2003 (the latter being the most up-to-date data presently available).

Prosecutions and convictions for rape, assault with intent to rape, and indecent assault: 1999–2003

	Rape		Assault with intent to rape		Indecent assault	
	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions
1999	31	7	3	1	86	61
2000	24	9	2	1	111	88
2001	33	13	1	1	111	81
2002	30	10	0	0	90	55
2003	31	10	0	0	109	66

Social Housing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new dwellings were constructed for social housing in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [20301]

Mr. Hanson: The number of social houses completed in each of the last three years was as follows:

	Number
2002–03	1,295
2003–04	854
2004–05	1,073

The figures include new build and houses purchased from the open market either in good condition or from rehabilitation, prior to letting. All are additions to social housing stock.

St. Luke's Hospital (Suicides)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients or former patients at St. Luke's Hospital, Armagh, have committed suicide within the confines of the hospital in the last 10 years. [20603]

Mr. Woodward: There have been two patients or former patients at St. Luke's Hospital, Armagh, that have committed suicide within the confines of the hospital in the last 10 years. Both suicides occurred during the year 2002.

Stinger Devices

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions stinger devices have been used in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years, broken down by district. [19460]

Mr. Woodward: This information is not readily available and to obtain it would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many stinger-type devices are operated by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [19461]

Mr. Woodward: There are 212 stinger devices in service with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Teacher Numbers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teachers are working within the education system in Northern Ireland, broken down by age group. [19555]

Angela E. Smith: The numbers of teachers working in the grant-aided schools and Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland in September 2005, broken down by age groups are detailed in the table. The figures do not include teachers employed in the Voluntary grammar sector, which can be obtained only at disproportionate cost from each school.

Age group	*Permanent teachers*	*Temporary teachers*	*Further education colleges*	*Total*
Under 30 years	2,452	506	90	3,048
30–39 years	5,284	181	421	5,886
40–49 years	4,358	110	841	5,309
50–59 years	4,543	143	798	5,484
60 +	220	42	90	352
Total	16,857	982	2,240	20,079

Teenage Pregnancies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many girls under the age of 16 years became pregnant in each health board in the last year for which figures are available *(a)* in total and *(b)* expressed as a percentage of under-16s in descending order by region. [21171]

Mr. Woodward: It is not possible to provide information on the number of pregnant girls aged under 16 years in Northern Ireland, as the number of pregnancies is not recorded.

The number of births to teenage girls aged under 16 years registered in Northern Ireland in 2004 is shown in the table.

Health board	*(a) Total number of births for girls under the age of 16 years*[1]	*(b) Percentage of mid year population estimates*
Eastern	22	0.03
Northern	8	0.02
Southern	6	0.02
Western	3	0.01
Northern Ireland	39	0.02

[1] Data for number of births during 2004 is currently provisional as is subject to change.

Notes:

1. The number of births refers to all live and still births to women aged under 16 resident in Northern Ireland.
2. Percentages are calculated using the mid year population figures of those aged under 16 within each Health Board for 2004.

Source:

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Vacant Dwellings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of vacant dwellings in *(a)* public and *(b)* private sectors in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [20303]

Mr. Hanson: The information in respect of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties is set out as follows in the form requested. The information in respect of the private sector is not available in the same format but the latest published figures from the Housing Condition survey 2001 are provided.

Northern Ireland housing executive total vacant properties

	Number
2002–03	6,268
2003–04	5,614
2004–05	4,810

The House Condition Survey 2001 shows that there were an estimated 25,562 vacant dwellings in the private sector. Of these, 17,595 (3.9 per cent. of the housing stock) were in the owner occupied sector and 7,967 (13.8 per cent. were in the rented sector).

Vehicle Theft

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many recorded *(a)* theft of vehicle and *(b)* unauthorised taking of vehicle offences there have been in each Police Service of Northern Ireland district command in each of the last three years; and what percentages of vehicles were recovered. [19467]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland records theft of vehicles and unauthorised taking of vehicles as a single category. These figures are provided in the following table. No central record is maintained in relation to the recovery of vehicles.

Recorded theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Northern Ireland	8,410	5,369	4,456
Urban Region	5,981	3,486	2,908
Antrim	263	188	108
Ards	275	131	99
East Belfast	640	267	213
North Belfast	882	568	498
South Belfast	1,472	732	646
West Belfast	610	410	423
Carrickfergus	118	50	42
Castlereagh	284	182	143
Larne	49	45	40
Lisburn	757	546	415
Newtownabbey	392	246	182
North Down	239	121	99
Rural Region	2,429	1,883	1,548
Armagh	128	94	79
Banbridge	98	100	48
Ballymena	133	120	66
Ballymoney	43	27	23
Coleraine	132	128	97
Cookstown	60	59	50
Craigavon	258	241	151
Dungannon and South Tyrone	150	112	99
Down	328	205	143

Recorded theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Fermanagh	92	75	53
Foyle	265	243	251
Limavady	35	43	46
Magherafelt	75	29	22
Moyle	51	28	23
Newry and Mourne	404	280	311
Omagh	90	46	44
Strabane	87	53	42

Waiting Lists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients from each health board area in the Province are waiting for radiotherapy treatment. [20074]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of people awaiting radiotherapy treatment is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time has been that patients in the Province have waited for radiotherapy in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [20076]

Mr. Woodward: Information on waiting times for radiotherapy treatment is not collected centrally.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many contractors are working within each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland for the Eaga Partnership Warm Homes Scheme, broken down by those contractors fitting *(a)* heating systems and *(b)* insulation measures. [19529]

Mr. Hanson: There are currently 17 heating contractors and 10 insulation contractors working on the Warm Homes Scheme across all the parliamentary constituencies throughout Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent monthly update from the Warm Homes Scheme in Northern Ireland and the steps he is taking to increase take-up of the scheme in those areas where take-up is low. [19530]

Mr. Hanson: The Department for Social Development is keen to ensure that as all those eligible for assistance under the Warm Homes Scheme are fully aware of their entitlement and can access the scheme with the minimum amount of bureaucracy. For this reason management of the scheme has been passed to Eaga Partnership, which has been working with a variety of organisations across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that Warm Homes information is passed on to those most vulnerable and who may be eligible for the grant. This activity includes a variety of methods including local press releases, information sessions for community groups, training sessions for healthcare professionals and targeted mail shots. Time is also spent briefing MLAs and local authorities on Warm Homes, performance statistics and discussing local approaches to promote the scheme in individual areas where uptake may be low.

Weapon Licences

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for personal protection weapon licences have been made in each month since August 2004; and how many such licences were issued in each month. [19196]

Mr. Woodward: The following information has been supplied by the PSNI.

PPW applications

	Number of PPW applications	Number of PPW licences issued
August 2004	21	19
September 2004	26	24
October 2004	21	17
November 2004	13	10
December 2004	9	6
January 2005	14	13
February 2005	10	3
March 2005	16	13
April 2005	6	4
May 2005	11	7
June 2005	12	11
July 2005	5	2
August 2005	2	1
September 2005	11	4

For a firearm certificate to be issued the Chief Constable must be satisfied that the applicant is a fit person and has a legitimate reason to hold a firearm. Where the Chief Constable has information from his own sources of a real and immediate risk to a person's life from terrorists he may allow an application for a firearm certificate for a personal protection weapon.

The figures do not include PPWs held by the security forces.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

14 to 19 Education

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent representations she has received on the Government's 14–19 White Paper; and if she will make a statement. [20592]

Jacqui Smith: My right hon. Friend has had a number of meetings recently in which the 14–19 White Paper was discussed. We will be publishing later in the autumn a 14–19 implementation plan. This will set out progress since publication of the White Paper specifically: action we have taken in the short term to raise attainment; reform of qualifications and the curriculum for the long term; and delivery on the ground.

Academy Courses (London West)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the 16 to 19-year-olds expected to study at the proposed academy on the Brunel University's Uxbridge campus will be studying courses not presently provided by schools and

colleges in the London West Learning and Skills Council area; and what courses she expects these to be. [19520]

Bill Rammell: The Brunel HSBC Education Trust Academy is currently in the feasibility stage of development, where its viability is assessed and consulted on with local stakeholders. It is, therefore, too early to give a detailed breakdown of the curriculum it would offer. The proposed specialism of the Academy is in mathematics, science, engineering and technology.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the criteria against which the proposal to establish a 16 to 19 academy based on Brunel University's Uxbridge campus is being evaluated. [19521]

Bill Rammell: My right hon. Friend will make a decision on whether to establish The Brunel HSBC Education Trust Academy, having consideration of the sponsors' vision and objectives for the Academy, the proposed education provision and the value for money and effectiveness of the Academy building design. Consideration will also be given to the findings of the consultation process, currently under way, including the views of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) both locally and nationally. In line with the Academy programme ethos the Brunel HSBC Education Trust Academy aims to attract students who might not otherwise have remained in education at age 16. This will be in particular students from the LSC London West and nearby areas.

Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to improve the *(a)* levels of awareness of and *(b)* information about allergies and related issues for (i) teachers, (ii) non-teaching classroom assistants and (iii) professionals who work in pre-schools; and if she will make a statement. [19648]

Jacqui Smith: To assist all staff working in schools and early settings to support children with medical needs and manage their medicines, the Department jointly with the Department of Health published guidance "Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings" March 2005. The guidance includes a section on common conditions including anaphylaxis, though it is not a substitute for detailed medical advice. It is important that the needs of children are assessed on an individual basis and staff receive appropriate training and support from health professionals

The guidance provides schools and early years settings with practical advice to help them put in place policies on managing medicines and to put in place effective management systems to support pupils with medical needs.

Asperger's Syndrome

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps she is taking to ensure that teachers are trained to provide appropriate support to children with Asperger's syndrome; [19642]

(2) if she will take steps to ensure that appropriate levels of behaviour support are provided for children with Asperger's syndrome; [19643]

(3) if she will take steps to ensure that each child diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome receives an assessment of needs from an educational psychologist at the time of diagnosis; [19644]

(4) if she will take steps to ensure that appropriate training and support is provided for teachers dealing with children with Asperger's syndrome. [19645]

Maria Eagle: Maintained schools and local authorities have statutory duties to identify and make suitable provision for all children with special educational needs (SEN), including those with Asperger's syndrome. Where necessary, local authorities have a duty to assess children's SEN and draw up SEN statements. These assessments, which do not need to wait until a child receives a diagnosis, must include advice from an educational psychologist. The SEN Code of Practice, which gives statutory guidance to schools, local authorities and others, and the assessments are in place to ensure that children with SEN receive the appropriate levels of support, including behaviour support.

The Good Practice Guidance on autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) (2002), published by the Departments for Education and Skills and Health, recommends that all those who provide for children with ASDs, including Asperger's syndrome, should have some knowledge and understanding of the disorders. In order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status, all trainee teachers must demonstrate competences in SEN including that they know how to seek advice from specialists on less common types of SEN and that they can identify and support pupils who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Newly Qualified Teachers, during induction, must demonstrate they can plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils with SEN. For in-service training, all schools have a School Development Grant which they can use for purposes such as supporting professional development in SEN, including training in Asperger's syndrome, if they feel that is needed.

Under the SEN strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement" the Department has commissioned the Teacher Development Agency to carry out work to the value of £1.1 million over the period 2005–08 to strengthen teachers' SEN skills. This includes work to strengthen the SEN training infrastructure by creating a network of SEN tutors in order to encourage the sharing of expertise.

Asthma

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what guidance she has issued to schools on dealing with students who have asthma; and what recent discussions she has had on this matter; [19639]

(2) what steps she is taking to ensure that each school has an asthma policy; [19640]

(3) what steps she is taking to ensure that all students with asthma are *(a)* encouraged and *(b)* enabled to take part in (i) school sports and (ii) other physical activity. [19641]

Jacqui Smith: In March 2005 jointly with the Department of Health, the Department published guidance "Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings" to help schools and their employers develop and put in place policies on the management of pupils' medicines and on supporting pupils with medical needs. However there is no legal requirement on local authorities or schools to have such policies in place. The guidance provides some basic information on some common conditions, including asthma, and encourages schools to develop an environment that is asthma friendly. In particular, the guidance recommends that all schools should have an asthma policy as an integral part of their policy on medicines and medical needs. The guidance also recommends all staff, particularly PE teachers, should have training or be provided with information about asthma once a year so that they can support children in all aspects of school life including physical activities when appropriate.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many local education authorities in South England applied for a Building Schools for the Future one-school pathfinder project in the most recent round of applications for the Targeted Capital Fund. [19201]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities were not asked to apply for a Building Schools for the Future one-school pathfinder project. It is the Government's ambition that all local authorities should have capital funding allocated to rebuild, or refurbish, at least one secondary school by 2011. It is our aim to achieve this by investment through Building Schools the Future (BSF), the Academies programme, or this pathfinder scheme. Local authorities that are due to join BSF in the latter part of that programme are being prioritised in the one-school pathfinder scheme according to their building need data. The first 12 authorities that have been targeted to receive this funding were announced on 12 October.

Bullying

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of bullying were recorded in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Cumbria in each year since 1997; and what the average figures were for English local education authorities for each year. [19214]

Jacqui Smith: Data on bullying amongst children and young people are not collected centrally and there is no reliable basis for an estimate of prevalence. Bullying cases appear to be reported more often now than previously but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children. Indeed, as children and young people increasingly feel safe at school to report bullying, and confident that it will be tackled effectively and sensitively, it is likely reporting will rise.

However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance pack "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying Charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying.

Data on bullying are not collected by local education authorities and, similarly, there is no reliable basis for an estimate of prevalence.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the number of bullying-related child *(a)* suicides and *(b)* attempted suicides in (i) Greater London and (ii) England in each of the last 12 years; [20681]

(2) how many recorded incidents of bullying there were in each secondary school *(a)* Havering, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Greater London in each of the past five years. [20758]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect centrally figures relating to cases of child suicide and attempted suicide by children who may have been bullied.

Bullying cases appear to be reported more often now than previously but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or affecting more children. Indeed, as children and young people increasingly feel safe at school to report bullying, and confident that it will be tackled effectively and sensitively, it is likely reporting will rise. However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our soon to be updated guidance pack 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence', alongside the anti-bullying Charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying. We also offer specific advice to schools on tackling homophobic bullying and are developing advice on racist bullying.

Child Care (Grandparents)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to assist local authorities to support grandparents who act as foster parents, guardians or holder of a residence order in respect of their grandchildren; and if he will make a statement. [19744]

Maria Eagle: A number of tools have been developed to help local authorities to assess the needs of children and families. In particular, the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families and the new Common Assessment Framework may be used to identify the needs of children in family and friends placements and to help ensure that they receive the universal services to which they are entitled as well as any additional services.

The Department for Education and Skills is also undertaking a range of work targeted at improving the support provided to all those assessed and approved as foster carers, including grandparents, other relatives and friends of the family. This includes the development of proposals for a national minimum allowance for foster carers, the introduction of a new national helpline, work to improve training opportunities for foster carers, and work to improve the support offered to foster carers facing allegations.

The Department for Education and Skills has funded voluntary organisations to carry out work dealing specifically with family and friends carers. The Family Rights Group were funded to produce a framework for the support of family and friends carers, including information leaflets. They are also developing a resource pack on the use of Family Group Conferences. The Grandparents Association receives funding to provide an advice line for family and friends carers who have a residence order, or carers seeking to apply for a residence order.

The Department is currently considering how best to assist local authorities further to develop and support family and friends care.

Children in Care

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have left care on average over the last 10 years; and what percentage move directly into bed and breakfast accommodation. [18795]

Maria Eagle: The number of children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March 1995 to 31 March 2004 are shown in the following table. Information on the percentage of those who move directly into bed and breakfast accommodation is not collected centrally.

Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March 1995 to 2004 by age on ceasing[1,2]: England

Numbers

	1995[3]	1996[3]	1997[3]	1998[3]	1999[3]
All children[2]	33,200	32,400	30,100	29,000	27,100
Under 1	1,700	1,500	1,400	1,300	1,400
1–4	6,100	5,900	5,300	5,000	4,700
5–9	5,800	5,500	5,200	5,100	4,560
10–15	10,900	10,800	10,000	9,500	9,100
16 and over	8,700	8,600	8,200	8,100	7,400

Numbers

	2000[3]	2001[3]	2002[3]	2003[3]	2004[4]
All children[2]	26,700	25,000	25,400	24,300	25,300
Under 1	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,200	1,300
1–4	4,900	5,000	5,200	5,200	5,500
5–9	4,300	4,000	4,200	4,000	4,300
10–15	8,900	8,000	8,000	7,300	7,500
16 and over	7,200	6,800	6,700	6,600	6,800

[1] Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted
[2] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements
[3] Figures are derived from the SSDA903 one-third sample survey
[4] Figures are taken from the SSDA903 return, which in 1995–96,1996–97 and 2003–04 covered all children looked after.

Children (Leaving Care) Act

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place to monitor the impact of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [19658]

Maria Eagle: The impact of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is monitored at national level primarily through an annual data collection, the Commission for Social Care Inspection's Performance Indicators and the National Leaving Care Project Group. The National Leaving Care Project Group largely comprises of academics and representatives from voluntary organisations. It continues to meet regularly in order to monitor and promote on-going improvements for care leavers.

Since the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 was commenced in October 2001, statistics have been collected on outcomes for care leavers aged 19 who were in care at the age of 16. For the year ending 31 March 2004, 55 per cent. of care leavers aged 19 were engaged in education, employment and training on their 19th birthday. This represents an improvement, from 46 per cent. in 2001–02. Local authorities remain in touch with 85 per cent. of their care leavers; this represents an improvement from 2001–02, when they were in touch with 75 per cent.

City Academies

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the VAT liability that would be incurred if existing city academies made their buildings freely available to community groups; [17771]

(2) what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the VAT treatment of buildings work at city academies where the buildings are made available for use by community groups; [17778]

(3) what representations she has received from city academies about the VAT treatment of building work in cases where academies make their buildings available to community groups. [17780]

Jacqui Smith: We have received a number of representations from academies about the VAT position and funding for VAT costs, and are discussing the issues with them and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. My officials have also had discussions with officials from HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs.

VAT is not chargeable on the construction of academy buildings, or parts of these buildings, that are used exclusively for core education activities and/or for community use where no charge is made. VAT relief also applies to those parts of the building used for community activities where any charge is made, provided this does not exceed 10 per cent. of the total use. Long standing agreements with our European partners, which govern the application of VAT reliefs throughout the EU, mean that while we can maintain the existing relief for the construction of charitable buildings, relief cannot be extended further.

For academy buildings to be available for community use without restriction, VAT would have to be paid on the costs of the relevant parts of the building. However, in such cases an academy would be able reclaim VAT that related to taxable business use of the building. An academy would also be able to choose to reclaim VAT that relates to non-business use of the building and to account for output tax over the economic lifetime of the building. This would allow the academy to spread any VAT costs relating to non-business use of its buildings over a 20 year period.

Computers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the ratio of children to computers was at each primary school in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* England in each of the past 10 years. [20797]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect the data requested for questions *(a)* and *(b)*.

The national figures for computer to pupil ratios in primary schools in England from 1995 to 2005 are as follows:

	Computer to pupil ratios in primary schools
1995–96	1:19
1998	1:17.6
1999	1:13.4
2000	1:12.6
2001	1:11.8
2002	1:10.1
2003	1:7.9
2004	1:7.5
2005	1:6.7

A survey was not completed in 1997 so there are no national figures for that year.

Connexions Card

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department is planning to spend on the Connexions card in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, *(c)* 2007–08 and *(d)* 2008–09; and if she will make a statement. [20719]

Maria Eagle: The amount budgeted in the Connexions Card contract is:

	Amount (£ millions)
(a) 2005–06	£14.949
(b) 2006–07	£15.028
(c) 2007–08	£15.185
(d) 2008–09	£11.492

The aims and direction of Connexions Card are being changed in light of the Youth Opportunity Card announced in "Youth Matters". We will use experience of developing the Connexions Card to inform the development of the Youth Opportunities Card. A decision about the future of the Connexions Card will be made in the light of the evaluation of the Opportunity Card pilots.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17990]

Maria Eagle: No vehicles for which the Department for Education and Skills has responsibility are fitted with retreaded tyres.

Deprivation Indicators

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the 20 local authority wards with the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest proportions of children (i) receiving free school meals and (ii) leaving school at the minimum age. [20844]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is as follows:

(i) (a) The 20 local authority wards with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals[1]

District	*Ward*	*Pupils known to be eligible for FSM*	*Total pupils*	*Percentage of pupils eligible for FSM*
Liverpool	Princes Park	1,365	2,063	66.2
Tower Hamlets	Spitalfields and Banglatown	747	1,139	65.6
Wirral	Bidston and St James	1,695	2,603	65.1
Tower Hamlets	East India and Lansbury	1,407	2,163	65.0
Tower Hamlets	Bromley-by-Bow	1,423	2,213	64.3
Tower Hamlets	Whitechapel	967	1,510	64.0
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green South	1,315	2,055	64.0
Tower Hamlets	St Dunstan's and Stepney Green	1,570	2,468	63.6
Tower Hamlets	Shadwell	1,115	1,767	63.1
Liverpool	Central	354	564	62.8
Tower Hamlets	Limehouse	1,143	1,829	62.5
Manchester	Ardwick	1,178	1,889	62.4
Redcar and Cleveland	Grangetown	731	1,177	62.1
Manchester	Moss Side	1,461	2,361	61.9
Manchester	Hulme	647	1,049	61.7
Newcastle upon Tyne	Westgate	445	722	61.6
Tower Hamlets	Millwall	837	1,362	61.5
Liverpool	Everton	1,340	2,195	61.0
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green North	998	1,639	60.9
Liverpool	Kirkdale	1,298	2,140	60.7

[1] Includes five to 15-year-olds attending maintained primary, secondary, CTCs, academies, special and non-maintained special.

Source:

Annual School Census 2005 Final.

(b) The 20[1] local authority wards with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals[2]

District	Ward	Pupils known to be eligible for FSM	Total pupils	Percentage of pupils eligible for FSM
Stafford	Milford	0	503	0.0
Aylesbury Vale	Edlesborough	0	401	0.0
South Northamptonshire	Chase	0	399	0.0
North Kesteven	Cranwell and Byard's Leap	0	377	0.0
Wycombe	Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens	0	360	0.0
York	Heworth Without	0	357	0.0
Three Rivers	Chorleywood East	0	313	0.0
Durham	Neville's Cross	0	294	0.0
Harrogate	Washburn	0	275	0.0
East Dorset	Colehill West	0	265	0.0
Boston	South	0	256	0.0
South Kesteven	Witham Valley	0	250	0.0
Daventry	Walgrave	0	250	0.0
Test Valley	Harewood	0	243	0.0
South Northamptonshire	Astwell	0	242	0.0
Chiltern	Austenwood	0	238	0.0
South Kesteven	Hillsides	0	224	0.0
Wycombe	Hambleden Valley	0	223	0.0
Aylesbury Vale	Bierton	0	217	0.0
Bromsgrove	Woodvale	0	215	0.0

[1] A further 30 wards have 0 pupils known to be eligible for FSM. The wards listed above are those with the greatest number of pupils known not to be eligible for FSM.
[2] Includes five to 15-year-olds attending maintained primary, secondary, CTCs, academies, special and non-maintained special.
Source:
Annual School Census 2005 Final.

(ii) The earliest that a young person can leave school is on the last Friday in June after they turn 16. There is no information available on how many pupils leave from this point in the academic year. The most readily available figures are for young people in post-compulsory education at the end of the calendar year.

The 20 local authorities (LAs) with the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest percentages of 16-year-olds not in post-compulsory education or work based learning (WBL—e.g. apprenticeships) in 2003/04 are given in the following table. Participation estimates are not available below LA level or for individual inner London LAs.

Table: Percentage of 16-year-olds not in education or WBL by LA, end 2003

Not in full-time education	Percentage	Not in education or WBL[1]	Percentage
England	28	England	16
Inner London[2]	25	Inner London[2]	18
20 highest:			
Barnsley	41	Barnsley	27
Rochdale	39	Wakefield	26
Leeds	39	Thurrock	26
South Tyneside	38	Rochdale	25
Stoke-on-Trent	38	Leeds	25
Redcar and Cleveland	37	Derby	23
Salford	37	Birmingham	23
Wigan	37	Peterborough	23
Doncaster	37	Southampton	23
Wakefield	37	Medway	23
Derby	37	Torbay	23
Sandwell	37	Redcar and Cleveland	22
Durham	36	Oldham	22
Blackpool	36	Salford	22
Kirklees	36	Doncaster	22
Dudley	36	North East Lincolnshire	22
Hartlepool	35	Telford and Wrekin	22
Sunderland	35	Southend-on-Sea	22
Oldham	35	St Helens	21
St Helens	35	Tameside	21

Table: Percentage of 16-year-olds not in education or WBL by LA, end 2003

Not in full-time education	Percentage	Not in education or WBL[1]	Percentage
20 lowest:			
Wiltshire	22	Cumbria	11
Worcestershire	21	East Riding of Yorkshire	11
Barnet	21	Warwickshire	11
Croydon	21	Bedfordshire	11
Reading	21	Hertfordshire	11
Merton	20	Kingston upon Thames	11
Surrey	19	Oxfordshire	11
Bath and North East Somerset	19	Surrey	11
Hertfordshire	18	Cambridgeshire	10
Ealing	18	Brighton and Hove	10
Windsor and Maidenhead	18	North Yorkshire	9
Enfield	17	Rutland	9
Brent	16	Brent	9
Kingston upon Thames	16	Harrow	8
Waltham Forest	16	Wokingham	8
Wokingham	16	Bath and North East Somerset	8
Rutland	14	Enfield	7
Harrow	14	Redbridge	7
Redbridge	12	Richmond upon Thames	7
Richmond upon Thames	11	Waltham Forest	7

[1] Total of all full-time and part-time education and WBL, less WBL provision in education institutions.
[2] Inner London LAs have been excluded from this analysis, as only total figures are available.
Source:
This information is taken training by 16 and 17-year-olds in from the latest Statistical First Release "Participation in education and each local area in England".

Detentions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many detentions were issued in schools in Greater London in each of the last five years. [21086]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Dyslexia

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many candidates received extra time due to dyslexia while sitting *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* GCE A/AS level examinations in 2003–04. [17437]

Jacqui Smith: These data are not collected by the Department because the figures available for the number of candidates who received extra time while sitting GCSE and GCE A/AS level examinations is not broken down by disability or qualification.

Educational Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received from providers of Work-Based Learning about the replacement of training allowances with educational maintenance allowances; and if she will make a statement. [18703]

Maria Eagle: The Department has received a small number of letters from providers who have made representations through their local Members of Parliament. Each correspondent has received a full response outlining details of the reforms. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is leading on implementing the reforms and received one representation from the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) in July 2005. The LSC has invited the ALP to join the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Management Board and has consulted a range of providers through visits, workshops and attending Work Based Learning Provider meetings.

The extension of EMA to unwaged trainees should not be regarded as simply the replacement of the training allowance by EMA. It is a full package of financial support which will extend EMA to unwaged trainees and extend child benefit and child tax credit to their parents/carers. This will mean more money for the majority of unwaged trainees and their families, which are typically low to middle income households. Currently, the parents/carers of unwaged trainees cannot claim child benefit for them and lose income tested family benefits because the training allowance is treated as income for benefit assessment purposes. Those young people who are estranged from their parents/carers, and entitled to claim benefits in their own right, will also be much better off as they will be able to claim income support in addition to their EMA. Currently, these young people lose out because the training allowance is treated as income in assessing their entitlement to income support.

There was strong support from many respondents to the Government's public consultation in 2004 to extend the same package of support to unwaged trainees as was currently available to those who stay on in full time education.

Examinations

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many A and A* grades at GCSE were achieved in schools serving the 2,000 most deprived wards in the country in each year from 1997. [16722]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives the numbers of A* and A grades in GCSEs achieved by students in schools in the 25 per cent. most deprived super output areas[1].

	A*	A
2004	33,146	80,210
2003	28,654	76,520
2002	29,675	74,377
2001	28,253	72,144
2000	25,730	67,670
1999	23,573	65,871
1998	21,778	61,010
1997	17,036	52,549

[1] Deprivation classified within the English Indices of Deprivation.

Note:
These figures relate to full course GCSEs only.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to complete its review of coursework; and if she will make a statement. [20590]

Jacqui Smith: The 14–19 Implementation Plan will set out the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's timetable for completing the review of coursework. The implementation plan will be published later this autumn.

Foreign Languages

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase the numbers of pupils learning a foreign language at *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary level. [19313]

Jacqui Smith: In March 2005 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced £115 million "Boost for Modern Foreign Languages", providing support for language teaching and learning for this and the next 2 years.

For primary schools the funding will provide continuing support for initial and existing teacher training as well as training for support staff. To date we have trained 1,200 new primary teachers with a specialism in languages. Next month we will publish in hard copy and online our Key Stage 2 Framework for Languages, which sets out learning objectives for the four years of Key Stage 2. It will be supported by training, guidance and a planning tool.

The funding will support new approaches for teaching and learning for 11–18 year olds, including alternative qualifications and vocational options at Key Stage 4 which will provide more flexibility for pupils in their studies. We have expanded the list of qualifications that count towards performance table scores to include more language qualifications.

The funding will also allow language colleges to extend the role they play in supporting local primary and secondary schools in delivering language programmes. Last month the new languages recognition scheme, the Languages Ladder, became available

nationally. The scheme can be used by learners of all ages and is available in eight languages. The scheme differs from existing approaches to assessment in that there are separate qualifications in each language for reading, writing, listening and speaking. To date more than 250 centres—including local authorities and Specialist Language Colleges—have registered to take part in the scheme.

Free School Meals (Meriden)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schoolchildren in Meriden are eligible for free school meals; and what the take-up has been in each year since 1997. [19883]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]—Meriden parliamentary constituency 1997–2005—Position in January each year

	Maintained nursery and primary				
	Number on roll	*Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	11,870	2,196	18.5	2,554	21.5
1998	12,264	1,967	16.0	2,331	19.0
1999	12,508	1,817	14.5	2,208	17.7
2000	12,288	1,686	13.7	2,208	18.0
2001	12,261	1,555	12.7	2,169	17.7
2002	11,872	1,487	12.5	1,858	15.7
2003	11,587	1,354	11.7	1,776	15.3
2004	11,238	1,315	11.7	1,758	15.6
2005	11,096	1,242	11.2	1,689	15.2

	Maintained secondary				
	Number on roll	*Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
1997	6,712	916	13.6	1,286	19.2
1998	6,820	857	12.6	1,284	18.8
1999	6,960	814	11.7	1,183	17.0
2000	7,278	843	11.6	1,289	17.7
2001	7,413	837	11.3	1,369	18.5
2002	7,516	786	10.5	1,213	16.1
2003	7,621	794	10.4	1,224	16.1
2004	7,611	786	10.3	1,276	16.8
2005	7,444	783	10.5	1,241	16.7

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Prior to 2003 "Number on roll" includes all full-time and part-time pupils who are sole registered, excluding boarding pupils. Due to underlying changes in data collection, this coverage was extended to also include all pupils with dual (main) registration and boarding pupils from 2003.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schoolchildren in Meriden receive free school meals, broken down by school. [19884]

Jacqui Smith: Information on school meals for each maintained nursery, primary and secondary school in Meriden parliamentary constituency is shown in the table.

Meriden parliamentary constituency: school meal arrangements[1]—January 2005

	School name	*Number on roll*	*Number of pupils taking free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
104041	Coppice Junior School	272	8	2.9	17	6.3
104044	Dorridge Junior School	384	4	1.0	4	1.0
104045	Dorridge Nursery and Infant School	320	9	2.8	9	2.8
104059	Balsall Common Primary School	674	6	0.9	7	1.0
104060	Marston Green Junior School	276	13	4.7	18	6.5
104061	Kingshurst Junior School	254	59	23.2	85	33.5
104062	Kingshurst Infant School	252	47	18.7	60	23.8
104064	Hockley Heath Primary School	225	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
104065	Tidbury Green School	343	6	1.7	10	2.9
104066	Castle Bromwich Junior School	474	52	11.0	64	13.5
104067	Castle Bromwich Infant School	426	39	9.2	51	12.0
104068	Bennetts Well Junior and Infant School	211	60	28.4	76	36.0
104069	Alcott Hall Junior and Infant School	243	73	30.0	106	43.6
104070	Coleshill Heath School	415	94	22.7	127	30.6

Meriden parliamentary constituency: school meal arrangements[1]—January 2005

	School name	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free school meals	Percentage of pupils taking free school meals	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
104071	Windy Arbor Junior and Infant School	293	58	19.8	92	31.4
104073	Marston Green Infant School	307	12	3.9	15	4.9
104074	Cheswick Green Primary School	209	6	2.9	7	3.3
104077	Yorkswood Primary School	333	100	30.0	136	40.8
104083	Bosworth Wood Primary School	393	84	21.4	129	32.8
104087	Meriden Church of England Primary School	208	5	2.4	5	2.4
104088	Bentley Heath Church of England Primary School	441	8	1.8	9	2.0
104093	Berkswell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	221	4	1.8	5	2.3
104094	George Fentham Endowed School	205	17	8.3	19	9.3
104095	Lady Katherine Leveson Church of England School	180	4	2.2	5	2.8
104096	St. Patrick's CofE Junior and Infant School	301	7	2.3	8	2.7
104097	St. Mary and St. Margarets Church of England Aided Primary School	248	21	8.5	22	8.9
104101	St. George and St. Teresa Catholic Primary School	218	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
104103	St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School	232	43	18.5	53	22.8
104104	St. Anne's Catholic Primary School	355	42	11.8	47	13.2
104105	Bishop Wilson Church of England Primary School	424	99	23.3	133	31.4
104106	St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School	209	31	14.8	42	20.1
104107	St. John The Baptist Catholic Primary School	206	49	23.8	56	27.2
104111	Arden School	1,221	8	0.7	13	1.1
104115	Heart of England School	1,243	33	2.7	37	3.0
104116	Park Hall School	1,507	159	10.6	237	15.7
104117	Whitesmore School	1,115	220	19.7	306	27.4
104118	Smith's Wood School	1,124	198	17.6	385	34.3
104120	The Archbishop Grimshaw Catholic School	1,234	165	13.4	263	21.3
104121	Hatchford Community Primary School	452	101	22.3	148	32.7
131292	Knowle Church of England Primary School	462	6	1.3	8	1.7
131502	Kingfisher Primary School	281	69	24.6	110	39.1
133720	Dickens Heath Community Primary School	149	3	2.0	3	2.0

[1] Including dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[2] Less than three pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schoolchildren in Meriden whose families are in receipt of child tax credit are eligible for free school meals. [19885]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not collected centrally.

Free school lunch eligibility covers children whose parents receive:

Income support (IS);

Income based jobseekers allowance (IBJSA);

Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;

Child tax credit, provided they are not entitled to working tax credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £13,910 (2005/06 FY);

Guaranteed element of State pension credit.

Children receiving IS or IBJSA in their own right are also entitled to a free school lunch.

GCSE Results

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people have failed to gain A*-C grade at both GCSE English and mathematics in each year since 1997. [19206]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the number failing to gain A*-C in GCSE English and mathematics can be found as follows.

Number of 15-year-olds not achieving A-C in GCSE English and maths*

	Total 15-year-olds (thousand)			Not achieved grades A*-C (thousand)			Not achieved grades A*-C (percentage)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2004	327.4	316.2	643.6	196.5	165.0	361.5	60	52	56
2003	317.5	304.6	622.1	192.9	161.9	354.8	61	53	57
2002	309.7	296.8	606.6	186.5	157.0	343.6	60	53	57
2001	307.9	295.5	603.3	190.6	160.3	350.8	62	54	58
2000	295.5	284.8	580.4	184.1	157.2	341.4	62	55	59
1999	297.1	283.9	581.0	189.0	160.5	349.5	64	57	60
1998	293.6	281.6	575.2	192.0	164.0	356.0	65	58	62
1997	299.5	287.3	586.8	199.2	171.5	370.7	67	60	63

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what policies the Government have in place to improve boys' GCSE examination results; and how much funding has been allocated for such policies in 2005–06. [21030]

Jacqui Smith: The Secondary National Strategy for School Improvement is responsible for raising standards for all pupils, including boys, across the 11–16 age range. A key focus of the strategy is to support schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning by giving careful attention to the learning needs of individual pupils, particularly those who are underachieving. The strategy has produced some materials aimed at improving core literacy and numeracy skills amongst boys. In 2005–06 we will be investing a total of £156 million to support schools and local authorities in raising standards for all pupils through the Secondary National Strategy.

The Department also supports a range of other initiatives aimed at raising the attainment of boys. For example, the Breakthrough Programme for Raising Boys' Achievement, in partnership with the National Primary Care Trust, focuses on sustainable changes to teaching and learning systems to help achieve pupils' potential. Playing for Success Centres use football and other sports to boost skills and motivation amongst pupils, particularly boys.

Grandparents

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to introduce an allowance for grandparents who are permanent carers for their grandchildren where the parents are unable to care for the children. [19518]

Maria Eagle: Grandparents caring for children who are looked after by the local authority are already entitled to receive an allowance in the same way as any other foster carer.

Where a child is not looked after by the local authority, grandparents may claim the same benefits and tax credits as any other carer of a child aged under 16 (including child benefit and child tax credits).

If a child is determined to be "a child in need", following an assessment by a local authority in accordance with the framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families, the local authority may then provide support to meet those needs, in accordance with its responsibilities set out in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Local authorities may also pay an allowance to grandparents who have a residence order in respect of a child that they are looking after.

Where a child is orphaned or one parent has died and the other is missing, in prison (with at least two years to serve) or detained in hospital by the order of a court a carer may claim a guardian's allowance from the Inland Revenue.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate her Department has made of the number of children who are cared for permanently by their grandparents. [19519]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect information by which an estimate could be made of the number of children who are cared for permanently by their grandparents.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many grandparents in England have *(a)* residence orders, *(b)* registered foster caring agreements, *(c)* guardianship status and *(d)* private arrangements in place for raising grandchildren full time. [19534]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Department for Education and Skills does not collect information on the number of grandparents who have residence orders, are the subject of registered foster caring agreements, have guardianship arrangements or who have private arrangements in place for raising grandchildren full time.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place to ensure that grandparents who are raising their grandchildren full time receive the financial help to which they are entitled. [19535]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* Grandparents may seek advice on their entitlement to financial support from a range of sources including their local Jobcentre Plus, their local HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Enquiry Centre, the HMRC tax credits helpline, the Pension Service and their local authority. Information is also provided on the Directgov website.

Grandparents may also contact one of the voluntary organisations that provide advice and assistance to grandparents and to others caring for a child who is not their own.

History Curriculum

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will consider integrating black history into the national history curriculum. [19652]

Jacqui Smith: The national curriculum programme of study for history includes a statutory requirement for all pupils to be taught about the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, both in Britain and the wider world. We strongly believe that the curriculum is flexible enough to reflect the needs of all pupils, including those with an ethnic minority heritage.

There is also guidance available to teachers. The QCA 'Respect for All' website and the history schemes of work both include guidance on how to include a multi-ethnic dimension to the teaching of history. QCA are also in the process of putting together a national bibliography of resources to support the teaching of black and multi-ethnic aspects of history.

Home Education

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school-age children are receiving education at home. [18844]

Jacqui Smith: Children receive education at home in a range of different circumstances. Their parents may exercise their right to educate them in the home on a

temporary or permanent basis. Other alternative education provision, which may include home tuition for children unable to attend school—for example through illness—is arranged at local level and is usually a temporary measure.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure that all children of compulsory school age in their locality receive a suitable full-time education. We do not collect information about the numbers of children who receive education at home, and it would be impractical to do so given the transient nature of much of this type of provision.

LEA Funding

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of migration into a local education authority on per capita funding for that LEA. [19320]

Jacqui Smith: The funding for each local authority through the current Schools Formula Spending Share system depends mainly on the number of pupils in that authority's schools. Thus if more pupils cross authority borders to join schools in a particular authority, then that authority will receive more funding. The same principle will work with the Dedicated Schools Grant, to be introduced from April 2006.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Barstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to introduce nutrition standards for meals provided in *(a)* children's homes and *(b)* other accommodation for looked-after children. [20489]

Jacqui Smith: Standards and guidance already exist aimed at ensuring food provided to looked-after children in children's homes is of an adequate standard. The "National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes" under section 23(1) of the Care Standards Act 2000 require that

> "children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared food and drink having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to shop for and prepare their own meals".

In addition, nutritional and practical guidelines were issued by The Caroline Walker Trust in conjunction with the Department of Health, Food Standards Agency and British Heart Foundation in "Eating well for looked-after children and young people". Early this year we issued Healthy Care publications with the National Children's Bureau. The publications include Healthy Care Briefings which address food and training materials for use with foster carers and residential social workers, to improve the understanding of the role of carers in promoting children's health and well-being.

A review of all National Minimum Standards for children's services is planned and nutrition for looked after children will be considered as part of that exercise.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned on the outcomes for looked-after children at various stages in their lives after they have left the care system; and if she will make a statement. [18587]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 14 October 2005]*: "Transitional Support for Care Leavers: An Evaluation of Costs and Outcomes" is the most recent research commissioned by the Department on the outcomes for care leavers. The study, led by the university of York, investigated the plans and support for young people aged 16–19 who were in the process of leaving the care of seven local authorities. The study is currently being written up for publication and will be published in 2006. In addition, Professor Harriet Ward and her colleagues at Loughborough university are about to undertake a new research study, "Looking After Children: Cohort Studies". These cohort studies will follow up a sample of care leavers approximately two years after they have ceased to be looked after.

Mathematics Centre of Excellence

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the new National Centre of Excellence in Maths Teaching. [18388]

Jacqui Smith: The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, being established as part of the Government's response to Professor Adrian Smith's report 'Making Mathematics Count', will help to improve children's and young people's enjoyment of and attainment in mathematics by improving the skills and knowledge of their teachers.

Working closely with other partners, including the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the National Strategies, the National Centre will support, broker and quality assure continuing professional development, it will build on and enhance existing provision as well as identifying gaps and needs and developing appropriate solutions. It will have a role in stimulating demand among teachers.

My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education announced the successful bidder for the National Centre on 6 October 2005. Contract negotiations are now under way and the centre is expected to launch in the summer of 2006.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17320]

Maria Eagle: The information on the number of air miles accrued is not held centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers". Guidance for Ministers on the use of air miles is set out in the Ministerial Code. The guidance makes clear that air miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the

benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity if this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Similar rules are in place for officials.

Missing Children

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were reported as missing *(a)* in England and Wales and *(b)* for each police authority in each year since 1997. [20662]

Maria Eagle: Statistics on the numbers of all children who are reported as missing are not collected centrally. We do know that around 800–900 children are reported missing from care each year in England. Children's Society estimates that each year in the UK 100,000 children run away or are forced to leave home to escape problems.

The Home Office has been working with the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Missing Persons Helpline to establish joint working arrangements to improve the recording, sharing and exchange of information, to improve the way in which missing persons are dealt with, and to inform our understanding of the problem in order to develop strategies to address it. Part of this work includes establishment of a comprehensive national police database of missing and unidentified people reported either to the police or the Helpline.

Responsibility for relevant figures in Wales is a matter for the administration for Wales.

National Centre for Languages

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the position of the UK in the recent report by the National Centre for Languages. [20957]

Jacqui Smith: We are aware of the booklet, 'Talking World Class', published by CILT, the National Centre for Languages and how it highlights the impact of language skills on the UK economy and questions how well equipped UK companies are to do business in other languages. One feature of the booklet is the survey which shows an aggregate of non-mother tongue skills in each of the participating 28 countries.

Our National Languages Strategy, published in December 2002, recognises the critical role that business can play in influencing young people's career choices, extending opportunities and promoting the value and importance of languages in the workplace. That is why we have funded CILT, the National Centre for Languages to work with employers to embed language skills into wider social and economic agendas, to extend employer engagement, and to stimulate and support the match of need by provision of training for their employees.

CILT is also funded by the Sector Skills Development Agency to create a Languages Strategy for the Skills for Business Network to ensure that Sector Skills Councils and employers take languages into account in their business planning.

The Department has also funded the British Chambers of Commerce to manage a programme of regional seminars to promote the value of languages for small and medium sized business and to raise the profile of the National Languages Strategy and the Regional Languages Networks with employers across the country.

To raise awareness among young people of how languages can increase their employability prospects the Department has funded CILT to publish a suite of materials—Languages Work. A key purpose of the materials is to make sure that key stage 3 pupils understand the importance of language skills in today's workplace and to provide them with the information about possible careers with languages so that they can make an informed choice about continuing to learn languages at key stage 4 and beyond. The cornerstone of our National Languages Strategy is to provide all pupils throughout key stage 2 with the opportunity to learn languages by the end of the decade. By introducing languages at an early age we believe that more young people will be enthused to choose to continue to learn languages beyond age 14, benefit from acquiring these marketable skills in their working lives and contribute to the country's global competitiveness.

National Contact Centres

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to monitor and assess *(a)* funding arrangements and *(b)* performance of the national contact centres. [17308]

Maria Eagle: As part of the 2002 Spending Review, the Government allocated £3.5 million to develop child contact centres. Of this, approximately £2.5 million was allocated to establish 14 new supervised child contact centres in England. Funding is administered and monitored on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills through the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) and the National Children's Homes (NCH). From the £3.5 million, approximately £0.5 million was allocated to support NACCC in implementing a set of national accreditation standards for all its member centres and to fund training for the 14 new centres. The Department made available in 2004–05 and 2005–06 a fund of £0.4 million to help sustain existing child contact centres. This is also administered by NACCC.

Both NACCC and the NCH are required to submit reports to the Department on each of the 14 centres against agreed performance measures, including the numbers of referrals. The National Association of Child Contact Centres takes responsibility for the collection of statistics, which enables it to develop an informed national perspective. A further sum totalling £7.5 million has been allocated for the period 2006–07 to 2007–08 for services which support child contact, including those delivered by child contact centres. The DFES will be working with CAFCASS, the National Association of Child Contact Centres and other service providers to identify options for the most effective use of these resources.

Outdoor Learning

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made with the guidance on outdoor learning; and what steps she is taking to ensure that children from low income families are not excluded from participating in out of school learning because of cost. [19072]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* As part of the emerging Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom, we shall consult shortly on a reminder to schools about visit safety. It will remind school staff that, when they follow employers' guidance and take reasonable care, not only do they keep pupils safe, but also the law protects staff if a pupil is harmed despite their care. Schools already make good use of our extensive and widely-welcomed guidance on visit safety.

A working group has been set up to look at overcoming barriers for children who are more likely to be excluded from school trips, including those from low income families. The recommendations of the working group will be reported in December and will help shape the final Manifesto to be published in spring 2006.

Phonics Teaching

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) on what criteria her decision to review the teaching of phonics was based; and if she will make a statement; [20588]

(2) if she will make a statement on proposed changes to the National Literacy Strategy. [20589]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are committed to promoting approaches to the teaching of literacy that draw upon the most reliable advice and evidence available. As part of this commitment and because of strong public debate about the teaching of reading, we asked Jim Rose to conduct a review of best practice in the teaching of early reading, including the place of phonics. This will provide independent advice to build on the success of the National Literacy Strategy (now part of the Primary National Strategy) and to help ensure even more children make progress with reading.

During 2006, the Primary National Strategy will review the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics to ensure they reflect the most recent and relevant research and information. This work will be aligned with the development of the "Early Development and Learning Framework" to ensure a consistent approach from birth to age 11. The review of the Literacy Framework will draw on the findings of Jim Rose's review and on a wide-ranging consultation with practitioners and expert groups.

Polling Stations in Schools

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has given regarding the closure of schools for use as polling stations. [18793]

Jacqui Smith: The use of schools as polling stations is provided for in the Parliamentary Election Rules contained in Schedule 1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which, in this respect, apply also to local government elections). These provide that Returning Officers have discretion to select schools as the venues of polling stations.

Information on the closure of schools for polling stations is available on the DfES Teachernet website. This states that if the area to be used for polling purposes can be isolated from the remainder of the school and has its own entrance, the school can continue to operate, otherwise it must close. Schools affected can move to alternative premises, or the governors must make reasonable efforts to make up the lost day, perhaps at the beginning/end of term.

This information and a list of frequently asked questions on the subject are available at:

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/p/pollingstations/index.cfm

Pre-school Places

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school places were available for (i) 3 and (ii) 4-year-olds in Pudsey in each of the last 10 years. [18934]

Beverley Hughes: All 4-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all 3-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all 4-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for 3-years-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 3-year-olds and 568,300 4-year-olds.

Information on the number free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds in Pudsey parliamentary constituency area is only available for January 2004 and 2005. These figures are shown in the table. The available information for Leeds local education authority area since 1997 is also shown.

The latest figures on early education places for 3 and 4-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up 3 and 4-year-olds, Leeds local authority

	3-year-olds			4 year olds		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year- olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	6,100	n/a	6,100	n/a	n/a	[4]8,800
1998	6,100	n/a	6,100	n/a	n/a	[4]8,900
1999	6,200	n/a	6,200	n/a	n/a	[4]8,700
2000	5,900	[5]1,800	7,700	n/a	n/a	[4]8,700
2001	5,600	[5]1,800	7,400	n/a	n/a	[4]8,400
2002	5,400	[5]2,000	7,400	7,400	[6]800	8,200
2003	5,200	[5]2,000	7,200	7,300	[6]870	8,100
2004	4,900	[7]2,100	7,000	7,100	[8]870	8,000
2005	4,900	[7]2,200	7,100	6,700	[8]820	7,600

n/a = not available.
[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.
[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds, Pudsey parliamentary constituency

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[5]*	*Total 4-year-olds*
2004	670	320	990	1,100	140	1,200
2005	620	410	1,030	990	160	1,100

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local education authority area and other factors. However, my Department doesn't publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Pupil Absences

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in each local education authority have been removed from the admissions register because of *(a)* extended family holidays and *(b)* long-term absence in each year since 1997. [19970]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 20 October 2005]*: My Department does not collect information on the reasons why pupils are removed from schools admissions and attendance registers.

Pupil Assaults

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many incidents of violence towards teachers by pupils there were in each of the last five years. [19328]

Jacqui Smith: Injuries at work due to violence, which result in absence for more than three days, are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR95). Figures for England show that there have been no fatal injuries to teachers since recording began under RIDDOR95. Since 2001 it has been possible to identify more serious but non-fatal injuries to teachers resulting from violence by pupils and the figures for each year are:

	Number
2001/02	50
2002/03	94
2003/04	47

Figures for 2004/05 are not yet available. In 2003/04 there was a change in the employer database against which injury reports are assigned. This has affected the profile of injury numbers within the public sector, and accounts for some of the reduction in the number of injuries in education in 2003/04.

One assault is one too many. But in a school system with about 750,000 staff and 7 million pupils these are relatively low numbers.

Runaway Children

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to ensure that the inspection of services and delivery within the Staying Safe Framework specifically asks questions about how the needs of runaway children are being met. [18806]

Maria Eagle: When looking at children's services, inspectors will be making judgements on whether the services are effective in establishing the identity and whereabouts of all children and young people aged 0 to 16. Inspectors will seek evidence that there are secure systems to ensure that all children and young people are known to health and education services, and that there are secure arrangements for sharing information when children and young people move across areas, including to unknown destinations.

Schools

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department takes to ensure that children without a place at the beginning of the school year are provided for by local education authorities. [19700]

Jacqui Smith: Legislation places a duty on individual local authorities to ensure that there are sufficient schools for every child of compulsory school age in their area. They must take anticipatory action when they consider that this may not be the case.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with local authorities in London to determine the effectiveness of this year's secondary school application procedure. [19701]

Jacqui Smith: Lord Adonis, who is Minister with responsibility for London school admission issues, has taken a keen interest in this year's admissions process. School admission is one of the issues he has discussed in meetings with directors of education and directors of childrens services. The Pan London Co-ordinated Admissions Programme Board has also reported to him on the first year's operation of the system it implemented to facilitate exchange of information between local authorities, to ensure that as many children as practicable could be offered a secondary school place on 1 March. Despite some IT problems, the system was successful in reducing the volume of multiple offers that many parents would previously have held, while others received none. Local authorities reported that at least 40 per cent. fewer children were without the offer of a place on 1 March than at the same stage in the previous year.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were left without a place in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools (i) at the beginning of the 2005–06 academic year and (ii) in each year since 1997. [19702]

Jacqui Smith: These data are not collected centrally. Individual local authorities may have information. Secondary co-ordination has eliminated multiple offers of places so that more children have been offered a secondary school place on the national offer date compared with the same stage in the process in previous years.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to improve the ability of secondary schools to satisfy parental choice in admissions. [19821]

Jacqui Smith: We have already taken steps to maximise parental satisfaction with the admissions process. Co-ordination of the secondary school admissions process has resulted in most multiple offers of school places being eliminated, resulting in a greater number of children being made an offer of a school place than would have received them at the same stage in the process in earlier years. Additionally, we have included a number of proposals in the draft School Admissions Code of Practice to make the system more transparent and fairer for parents. The intention is to put parents at the centre of the admissions process and to give them a greater choice as to where their children go to school, which can only be a good thing.

We also believe that allowing successful and popular schools to expand more quickly and more easily gives schools freedom to strengthen and develop in the direction they think appropriate in order to meet the needs of their local communities. That is why, as part of a broad spectrum of reform, we introduced new regulations in August to streamline the process for those schools that decide they have the capacity to expand.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children in the Waverley borough council area left school at the minimum age in each of the last five years, broken down by ward. [20843]

Jacqui Smith: The earliest that a young person can leave school is on the last Friday in June after they turn 16. There is no information available on how many pupils leave from this point in the academic year. The most readily available figures are for young people in post-compulsory education at the end of the calendar year.

The percentage of 16-year-olds not in post-compulsory education or work based learning (WBL—e.g. apprenticeships) in Surrey local authority (LA) is given in the table. Figures are provided for 1999/2000 to 2003/04 (the latest available). Participation estimates are not available below LA level.

Participation by 16-year-olds in Surrey LA

Percentage

As at end of the calendar year:	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[1]
Full-time education	82	83	81	81	81
Work based learning (WBL)	3	3	3	3	3
Part-time education	3	3	3	4	4
Total in education and WBL[2]	88	89	87	88	89
Not in full-time education	18	17	19	19	19
Not in education or WBL	12	11	13	12	11

[1] Provisional.

[2] Total of all full-time and part-time education and WBL, less WBL provision in education institutions.

This information is taken from the latest Statistical First Release "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17-year-olds in each local area in England".

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school nurses are employed by *(a)* each local authority and *(b)* individual schools in each authority; and how many vacancies there are in each authority. [18446]

Jacqui Smith: The majority of school nurses are currently employed and managed by the local NHS primary care trust, and therefore, information on school nurses is available from the Department of Health.

They were counted fully for the first time in the September 2004 NHS workforce census, which showed that there were 2,409 qualified nurses working in school nursing, of whom 856 were qualified school nurses (headcount). The next count will be available from the September 2005 census, with results published in March 2006.

Information from the NHS workforce census is not available at local authority and school level.

Information on the rate of vacancies lasting three months or more for school nurses is collected in the NHS workforce vacancy survey. As at March 2005, the three month vacancy rate for school nurses in the NHS was 1.9 per cent., which is a fall from 2.2 per cent. the previous year.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* pieces of (i) guidance and (ii) teaching material and *(b)* forms have been sent to (A) primary schools and (B) secondary schools in each of the last 20 months; and how many pages each document contained. [19697]

Jacqui Smith: The Department ceased sending publications automatically to both primary and secondary schools in England on a phased basis between April and December 2004. Discussions with local authorities and school head teachers and detailed research showed that schools wanted to be able to choose the printed publications (guidance, teaching materials and forms) they needed, when they needed them, and to be able to order multiple copies.

We have given schools this choice by introducing the online ordering system which enables schools to choose whether to download electronic copies or order the paper based publications they need at the right time for them and in the multiples they require. A fortnightly email service to schools informs them of new and important publications.

The publications sent to schools in the months prior to the role out of the online ordering system are contained in Annex A.

Annex A

Month	*Title*	*Primary/Secondary*
Publications sent by the DfES to all schools in England in March to July 2004		
March	Drugs: Guidance for schools	Both
	Drugs: Guidance for schools (summary)	Both
	Spectrum	Both
	A day with Dad	Both
	Write Here, Write Now	Primary
	KS3 parents' evening pack	Secondary
	EMA application forms	Secondary
	14–19 Reform: Interim progress report	Secondary
April	Pupil participation guidance—Working Together: Giving young people a say	Both
	Spectrum	Both
	National Primary Strategy: Progression in phonics	Primary
May	Performance pay progression	Both
	Spectrum	Both
	Excellence and enjoyment: Learning and teaching in the primary years	Primary
June/July	*Spectrum*	Both
Additional mailings to schools of a particular kind		
June	Letter regarding changes in reporting arrangements	Secondary (Specialist schools)

We do not keep a record of the total number of pages of each of these publications.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications to increase pupil numbers school organisation committees have received in the last 12 months; and what the outcome was of each of these applications. [19395]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* We strongly support the expansion of successful and popular schools. We have therefore provided that all maintained schools, including maintained special schools, may publish their own proposals to increase pupil numbers. We have also introduced a presumption that proposals by successful and popular secondary schools should be approved by the local School

Organisation Committee or Schools Adjudicator. This will enable more parents to be able to gain a place for their child at the school of their choice.

In addition, as part of their strategic planning for Building Schools for the Future (BSF), authorities are required to draw up a vision for the future of education provision in the area. This vision needs to demonstrate that their planning maximises the opportunity for parents to place their children into the school of their choice, and reduces surplus places where parents do not wish to send their children. BSF provides an unprecedented opportunity to achieve this.

Since the beginning of October 2004 the following proposals to increase pupil numbers by 27 or more places have been published.

Publication date	*LEA name*	*School name*	*Current school phase*	*Current admission numbers*	*Proposed admission numbers*	*Decision maker/outcome*
20 October 2004	Kent	Ellington School for Girls	Secondary	90	120	LEA determined to implement
1 December 2004	Newham	Cumberland School	Secondary	180	300	SOC approved
25 February 2005	Wiltshire	Bradon Forest School	Secondary	224	252	Adjudicator conditional approval
16 March 2005	Dorset	Highcliffe School	Secondary	216	243	Adjudicator rejected
25 March 2005	Hertfordshire	St Clement Danes VA Secondary School	Secondary	178	208	SOC approved
6 April 2005	Bradford	Green Lane Primary School	Primary	60	90	LEA determined to implement
28 April 2005	Essex	Helena Romanes School and 6th Form Centre	Secondary	240	270	Awaiting decision
25 May 2005	Hillingdon	Haydon School	Secondary	250	300	Awaiting decision
12 August 2005	Norfolk	Wymondham College	Secondary	118	159	Awaiting decision
9 October 2005	Poole	Old Town First School and Nursery	Primary	30	60	SOC approved

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has introduced to promote setting of classes; and if she will make a statement. [20591]

Jacqui Smith: We have encouraged schools to use setting since 1997. In the reports from Ofsted we have seen the proportion of Key Stage 3 lessons which are set rise since 1997 to over a third now with greater rises in English and mathematics. The majority of English, mathematics, science and modern foreign language lessons in secondary schools are organised by setting.

Through the Primary and Secondary National Strategies and in our Gifted and Talented programme we continue to offer guidance and support to schools on classroom practice so that they can make decisions about where and how to use pupil grouping and setting to best meet the learning needs of all their pupils.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much capital funding was available to schools in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06, broken down by (i) modernisation funding, (ii) devolved formula capital, (iii) the Targeted Capital Fund, (iv) basic need funding, (iv) the School Access Initiative, (vi) Building Schools for the Future, (vii) expansion of popular and successful secondary schools and (viii) total capital funding; and what forecast she has made of funding in each category in (A) 2006–07 and (B) 2007–08. [18936]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is set out in the following table:

£ million

Description	*Allocation*		*Forecast allocation*	
	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Modernisation	852	602	602	602
Devolved Formula Capital	774	805	1,000	1,050
Targeted Capital Fund[1]	186	200	275	550
Building Schools for the Future[2]	1,121	2,118	2,177	2,240
Successful and Popular Schools[3]	1	1	n/a	n/a
Other[4]	1,939	1,789	1,701	1,823
Total Capital Funding	4,873	5,515	5,755	6,265

[1] The forecast Targeted Capital Fund figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 represent a total allocation of £1.1 billion, phased over three years. The balance is to be allocated in 2008–09.
[2] The Building Schools for the Future figures include PFI credits. The forecast figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 represent available budget.
[3] There is no forecast for Successful and Popular Schools as this is a demand led programme. The figures in the table represent incentive funding provided by the Department.
[4] The Other line includes the following programmes; Voluntary Aided Schools, local authorities' Basic Need, Other ICT, Academies, smaller programmes.

Secondary Education Reform

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she plans to publish the implementation plan for the reform of 14–19 education. [19396]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The implementation plan will be published shortly. The plan will set action being taken now to raise 14–19 participation and achievement; forthcoming changes to curriculum and qualifications; and changes to the delivery infrastructure.

The plan will also include a clear timetable of next steps.

Secondary School Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary school teachers have left the profession before completing five years of teaching *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by subject since 21 December 2004. [16003]

Jacqui Smith: Information for teachers leaving the profession is not available in the format requested.

Provisional estimates for 2003/04 (the latest year for which data are available) indicate that of the 14,270 full-time regular teachers who left service from maintained secondary schools, 4,180 left before completing five years of teaching.

The following table shows the subject of initial teacher training for these teachers.

Full-time regular teachers who left service from maintained secondary schools in 2003/04, with less than five years service, by subject of qualification

	Number
Total leavers	4,180
Of which:	
English (including Drama)	670
Science	630
Modern foreign languages	460
Mathematics	370
Physical education	360
Technology[1]	340
History	230
Geography	230
Art	190
Religious education	140
Music	120
None/Unknown	310
Other[2]	130

[1] Technology includes Design and Technology, Information and Communications Technology and Business Studies.

[2] Other includes Citizenship, Social Studies, Classics and Economics.

Notes:

1. Figures are provisional.

2. The teaching service completed may not have been continuous or completed entirely in maintained secondary schools.

Source:

Database of Teacher Records.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to special needs provision in Suffolk in each of the last five years. [19691]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is contained within the following table:

£

	Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs
2001–02	23,452,000
2002–03	29,012,000
2003–04	32,374,000
2004–05	41,529,000
2005–06[1]	43,991,000

[1] The data is taken from section 52 Budget 2005–06 data is subject to change by the local authority.

Notes:

1. Includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad, educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and inclusion administration, assessment and co-ordination. Also included is the funding delegated to primary and secondary schools identified as "notional SEN" and the individual schools budget (ISB) for special schools.

2. The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN while the figures recorded against "notional SEN" are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN. In 2005–06, Suffolk local authority also budgeted £5 million for SEN transport expenditure but this is not included in the above table as figures are not available prior to 2005–06.

3. Data reported in cash terms as reported by Suffolk local authority as at 18 October 2005 and are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure adequate provision for special educational needs. [19818]

Maria Eagle: Local authorities have important and extensive duties to identify, assess and make provision for children with special educational needs and to keep their arrangements for doing so under review. Schools, early education settings, local authorities and others must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, which gives guidance on carrying out their statutory duties under the 1996 Education Act.

The Government published in February 2004 their SEN strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement", which sets out a long-term programme to improve SEN provision and to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN. As part of this strategy, the Department is promoting more consistent practice through a team of national SEN advisers. The Advisers are providing support and challenge to local authorities on key SEN issues, including the management of provision for children with special needs.

Special Schools (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many places at special schools in Kent there were in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2004–05. [19813]

Maria Eagle: The available information is provided in the table and shows the maximum number of day pupils and the maximum number of boarding pupils for whom special schools are formally approved to make a provision.

All special schools[1]: number of pupils on roll and the maximum number of day and boarding pupils

	Kent local authority			
Position as at January each year	*Number of pupils on roll[2]*	*Maximum number of day pupils[3]*	*Maximum number of boarding pupils[4]*	*Total maximum number of day and boarding pupils*
1998[5]	3,530	2,960	929	3,889
1999	3,199	2,624	987	3,611
2005	2,950	2,877	629	3,506

[1] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[2] Number of solely registered pupils on roll in special schools at the time of the Census (includes both day and boarding pupils).

[3] Maximum number of day pupils for whom special schools are formally approved to make a provision.

[4] Maximum number of boarding pupils for whom special schools are formally approved to make a provision.

[5] Before Local Government Reorganisation.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Teachers

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the criteria are for entry to the Graduate Training Programme for teachers;

and whether previous teaching experience and qualifications are taken into account when considering applications. [19698]

Jacqui Smith: The conditions of entry to the Graduate Teacher Programme are the same as those for entrants to all courses of initial teacher training in England. These are laid down in the document "Qualifying to teach: Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training" which can be seen at www.tda.gov.uk/qualifyingtoteach

Teaching experience is desirable before entry to training, but is not a statutory entry requirement. Teaching and school experience is taken into account by employment-based and conventional teacher training providers when they make decisions about whom they accept onto programmes.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to increase the number of male teachers working in early years educational provision. [19819]

Jacqui Smith: We are fully committed to increasing the diversity of the early years workforce and, in particular, to increasing the proportion who are men. We made this very clear in our 10-year strategy for child care, "Choice for parents: the best start for children" published last December and again in our Children's Workforce Strategy published in April this year.

We work closely with local authorities and other key partners such as Jobcentre Plus to support employers in recruiting early years workers. This includes several initiatives to help boost the number of men in the workforce. For example, earlier this year we undertook regional press and radio advertising which used positive images of men working in the sector. We have produced a video for men considering working in early years. We have also commissioned the Daycare Trust to work with local authorities to enhance their efforts to promote the recruitment of men in their local labour markets.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that qualified teachers from Australia and New Zealand are able to teach in England; and if she will make a statement. [20343]

Jacqui Smith: Under current regulations qualified teachers from Australia and New Zealand are able to teach in England for up to four years without gaining qualified teacher status (QTS). To continue teaching here for longer, they need to gain QTS.

For those teachers who want to gain QTS, the Training and Development Agency for Schools operates the overseas trained teachers scheme which assesses individuals' closeness to QTS and the amount of training they will need to reach this standard.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary school teachers teach the subject in which they undertook a degree; and how many teach a subject different from their degree qualification, broken down by degree subject. [20680]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. The following table shows the highest qualification held by secondary school teachers in the subjects that they taught in 2002, the latest year for which data are available.

Teachers in service
Full-time teachers in maintained secondary schools—
Highest post A level qualification[1] held in the subjects they teach[2] to year groups 7–13

England — *Percentages[3]*

	Degree[4]	*BEd*	*PGCE*	*Cert. Ed.*	*Other qual.*	*No qual.*	*Total teachers (000)*
Mathematics	42±3	15±2	9±2	7±1	2±1	24±2	28.2
English	51±3	15±2	7±1	6±1	1±1	20±2	29.4
Combined/General Science	62±3	12±2	10±2	4±1	1±1	11±2	28.3
Biology[5]	71±5	7±3	11±4	3±2	-±1	7±3	5.6
Chemistry[5]	72±5	6±3	12±4	1±1	1±1	7±3	5.2
Physics[5]	63±6	11±4	15±4	3±2	-±-	8±3	4.7
Other Science[5]	10±6	4±4	5±4	-±-	-±-	80±8	1.6
French	54±3	7±2	10±2	3±1	2±1	23±3	16.0
German	47±5	6±3	13±4	1±1	2±1	30±5	6.9
Spanish	37±7	8±4	19±6	-±-	3±2	33±7	3.6
Other Modern Languages	18±8	-±-	9±7	-±-	3±4	71±10	1.4
Design and Technology[6]	26±3	20±3	7±2	21±3	2±1	24±3	20.9
ICT[6,7]	13±2	6±1	8±2	2±1	3±1	69±3	18.9
Other/Combined Technology[6]	30±10	13±8	16±7	18±9	2±3	20±9	1.6
Business Studies	30±5	11±4	9±3	4±2	3±2	43±5	6.5
Classics	33±7	-±-	2±4	2±	-±-	63±7	1.0
History	57±4	9±2	6±2	6±2	-±-	23±3	13.7
Religious Education	22±3	8±2	8±2	4±1	2±1	57±4	14.2
Geography	53±4	9±2	6±2	5±2	1±1	25±3	13.7
Other Social Studies	35±5	6±3	2±2	2±1	-±1	54±6	4.9
Combined Arts/Humanities/Social Studies	5±3	4±2	7±3	1±1	1±1	83±5	5.3
Music	59±5	15±4	5±2	6±3	2±2	13±4	6.3
Drama	25±4	10±3	12±3	6±2	2±1	45±5	8.1
Art and Design	54±4	10±3	7±2	9±3	1±1	20±4	9.3
Physical Education	25±3	31±3	6±2	13±2	2±1	22±2	21.4

Teachers in service
Full-time teachers in maintained secondary schools—
Highest post A level qualification[1] held in the subjects they teach[2] to year groups 7–13

England *Percentages[3]*

	Degree[4]	*BEd*	*PGCE*	*Cert. Ed.*	*Other qual.*	*No qual.*	*Total teachers (000)*
Careers Education	2±2	1±2	3±3	4±4	3±4	87±7	1.5
PSHE[7]	1±-	1±-	2±1	1±-	-±-	95±1	61.4
General Studies	1±1	2±1	1±1	-±1	-±-	95±2	7.1
Citizenship	2±1	1±1	2±1	-±1	-±-	94±2	9.0
Other							32.8
Total[2,8]	33±-	10±-	7±-	5±-	1±-	44±-	388.4

[1] Where a teacher has more than one post A level qualification in the same subject, the qualification level is determined by the highest level reading from left (Degree) to right (Other Qual.). For example, teachers shown under PGCE have a PGCE but not a degree or BEd. in the subject, while those with a PGCE and a degree are shown only under Degree.
[2] Teachers are counted once against each subject which they are teaching.
[3] Confidence intervals exist around the estimated percentages due to the sample size of the survey.
[4] Includes higher degrees but excludes BEds.
[5] Teachers qualified in combined/general science are treated as qualified to teach biology, chemistry, or physics. Teachers qualified in biology, chemistry or physics are treated as qualified to teach combined/general science.
[6] Teachers qualified in other/combined technology are treated as qualified to teach design and technology or information and communication technology. Teachers qualified in design and technology or information and communication technology are treated as qualified to teach other/combined technology.
[7] Information and Communication Technology is abbreviated as ICT and Personal Social and Health Education is abbreviated as PSHE.
[8] 'Other' not included in total percentages.
- equals zero or less than 0,5.
Source:
Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey 2002

A copy of this table is available as Table 24 of the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England Volume, 2004 edition which has been placed in the House of Commons Library. Alternatively it may be accessed at the following URL:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000554/index.shtml.

The table does not give an indication of the proportion of subject periods delivered by teachers with a degree in that subject or a related subject.

Table 25 of the same publication provides the proportion of subject periods taught by highest level of qualification.

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in introducing arrangements to allow teachers to opt for salary sacrifice in order to obtain child care vouchers. [19083]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 12 September 2005 by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Children, Young People and Families column 2337W. This matter is still under consideration.

Travel to Schools

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average distance travelled by children to secondary school is in *(a)* England, *(b)* Kent and *(c)* Gravesham. [19812]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Average distance[1] travelled in miles by area of pupil residency—secondary[2] schools

	All pupils	*Pupils aged 11 to 15*	*Pupils aged 16 and over*
England	1.9	1.8	2.6
Kent local authority	2.9	2.8	3.4
Gravesham parliamentary constituency	1.8	1.8	2.1

[1] Distances calculated are straight line and take no account of the route pupils follow in order to get to school.
[2] Includes middle schools as deemed, CTCs and Academies
Source:
Annual School Census 2005 Final.

HEALTH

Academic Medical Centres

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on progress on identifying sites for the proposed academic medical centres. [19533]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The proposals set out in the Department's publication "Best Research for Best Health: a new national health research strategy", have been the subject of a public consultation. The consultation period ended on 21 October 2005. A summary of the responses made to the Department's proposals and an outline of the next steps in the process, will be published by 30 November 2005.

Air Pollutants

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what conclusions have been reached by her Department's Committee on the Medical Effects of Air

Pollutants in its consideration of the case for guidance on indoor air quality, referred to in the introduction to the Building Research Establishment Report 450 published in 2002; and if she will make a statement. [17250]

Caroline Flint: The Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) has provided guidance on indoor air pollution; its advice has been published on COMEAP's website at http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/comeap/state.htm. For some pollutants, COMEAP found it possible to recommend guidelines; for others this was not possible.

Alzheimers

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the recent changes in the provisions of medication for dementia sufferers in the Essex Strategic Health Authority area. [18081]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published its initial advice for the treatment of Alzheimer's in 2001. NICE is currently reviewing this guidance and further details are available on its website at www.nice.org.uk.

Alzheimer's (Drugs)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she has taken to ensure that the wider social implications of Alzheimer's drugs are fully taken into account by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [18884]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The detail of the appraisal methodology adopted by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is a matter for NICE itself. Information on NICE'S appraisal methodology is available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?0 = 654.

The Department's response to NICE'S consultation on its latest draft appraisal of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease is available in the Library.

Anaemia

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of anaemia among under-18s were diagnosed in England in each of the last five years. [18398]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table. Data are for all national health service hospitals in England.

Finished consultant episodes (FCEs) for anaemia for patients under 18-years-old

	FCE
1999–2000	17,102
2000–01	16,636
2001–02	17,264
2002–03	17,777
2003–04	17,398

Source:
Hospital episode statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Authority Boundaries

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many strategic health authorities are proposing new primary care trust boundaries that extend beyond the geographic boundary of the strategic health authority. [17776]

Mr. Byrne: Following the publication of "Commissioning a Patient led NHS" on 28 July, strategic health authorities (SHAs) will be submitting proposals to the Department for the configuration of their primary care trusts (PCTs) and for SHAs based on criteria set out in the document. The Department will consider the proposals and any proposed changes will require formal public consultation for three months from December. I am therefore unable to say what the configuration of PCTs and the new SHAs will be until the outcome of the statutory public consultation is known.

Avian Influenza

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure that all English residents are protected in the case of an outbreak of avian influenza. [17375]

Caroline Flint: We are committed to ensuring that the Government is as prepared as possible for a flu pandemic.

On 19 October, we published the revised "UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan", which updates the version published in March 2005. The plan provides a framework which seeks to reduce the health impact of a pandemic and the possible disruption it may cause to essential services and people's daily lives.

A key part of our preparedness plans is the purchase of 14.6 million treatment courses of antiviral drugs—enough to treat the quarter of the population who may fall ill in a pandemic. We are also working closely with manufacturers to ensure that the United Kingdom will be able to obtain a specific pandemic vaccine when one becomes available and have issued a tender for 'sleeping contracts' which will ensure we receive vaccine as early as possible.

The World Health Organisation considers the UK to be one of the best prepared countries in the world. However, we are continuing to develop our contingency plans to ensure that they are up to date and comprehensive.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contingency planning has been undertaken in Somerset for an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [19785]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority (SHA) has advised that planning for an influenza pandemic is a high priority for organisations and agencies concerned with emergency health planning in Somerset.

The SHA is leading the contingency planning on a multi-agency basis, which involves all primary care trusts (PCTs), national health service trusts, the

Health Protection Agency, NHS Direct, Westcountry ambulance services NHS trust, Somerset county council and Avon and Somerset police.

I understand that the planning process is building on the national guidance and the framework provided by the local government office. All PCTs and NHS trusts in Somerset are working to planning templates designed separately for the needs of primary care organisations, acute hospital trusts and mental health partnership trusts.

BCG Vaccinations

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which groups of children in schools in mid-Dorset and North Poole constituency will be offered BCG vaccinations; and whether parents of children who will not be offered the vaccination will be able to obtain the vaccination privately. [19848]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* On 6 July of this year, the Chief Medical Officer announced that the BCG vaccination programme in the United Kingdom would change, away from emphasis upon routine BCG vaccination in schools, to selective vaccination of high risk infants and other groups.

The provision of BCG vaccination outside of the target groups is no longer national health service policy. However, any parent concerned about their child's health should seek advice from their general practitioner.

Bounty Company

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions her officials have had with the Bounty Company about the extension of its use in hospital for the promotion of health messages. [18737]

Mr. Byrne: Officials held discussions earlier this year with the Bounty Company to explore the possibility of distributing the Department's breastfeeding leaflet in Bounty packs. Following these discussions it was decided not to pursue this idea further.

Cancer

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many non-smokers died from lung cancer in the Essex strategic health authority in the last five years. [18777]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effects on patients in the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency of the proposed transfer of specialist treatment of oesophagal and gastric cancer from Worthing Hospital to Brighton. [18832]

Caroline Flint: It is the responsibility of the local national health service organisations in conjunction with their cancer networks to plan and develop cancer services, and ensure that existing services comply with national guidelines published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority has advised that the proposal to transfer the service from Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust to Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust was agreed by the Sussex cancer network policy board following extensive work with local NHS organisations and other stakeholders.

I understand that this proposal will enable surgery to be performed in a cancer centre with the support of a full upper gastrointestinal, oesophagal, gastric and pancreatic, cancer multi-disciplinary team.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what restrictions exist on *(a)* the advertising of cures for cancer and *(b)* the reporting of items relating to cancer; and if she will make a statement. [17749]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Restrictions on advertising cures of cancer are detailed in section 4*(1) (a)* of the 1939 Cancer Act

> "No person shall take any part in the publication of any advertisement—*(a)* containing an offer to treat any person for cancer, or to prescribe any remedy therefore, or to give any advice in connection with the treatment thereof".

There are no such specific restrictions regarding the reporting of items relating to cancer.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people receiving cancer treatment have been sectioned under the Mental Health Act in each of the last five years for which records are available; [17782]

(2) what the known side effects relating to mental health are for each of the cancer drugs approved for use by the NHS. [17783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Cancer treatments can cause different reactions in different people. Where side effects are experienced, they will often be short term and will subside when treatment has ended.

Psychological distress is common among people affected by cancer. In March 2004, the National Institute for Heath and Clinical Excellence produced guidance on supportive and palliative care for adults with cancer. The guidance sets out recommendations on the provision of psychological support services.

Data on the number of people detained under the Mental Health Act while receiving treatment for cancer is not available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancer treatments have been approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17787]

Ms Rosie Winterton: To date, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has appraised 16 cancer treatments, some for more than one type of cancer.

The table shows the cancer treatments appraised by NICE in the past five years.

Further details are available on the NICE website at: http://www.nice.org.uk.

Title	Published
Ovarian cancer—taxanes (No. 3)—obsolete, replaced by No. 55	May 2000
Breast cancer—taxanes (No. 6)—obsolete, replaced by No. 30	June 2000
Brain cancer—temozolomide (No. 23)	April 2001
Pancreatic cancer—gemcitabine (No. 25)	May 2001
Lung cancer—docetaxel, paclitaxel, gemcitabine and vinorelbine (No. 26)—obsolete, updated by and incorporated into the guideline on the diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer (CG24)	June 2001
Ovarian cancer—topotecan (No. 28)—obsolete, replaced by No. 91	July 2001
Leukaemia (lymphocytic)—fludarabine (No. 29)	September 2001
Breast cancer—taxanes—review (No. 30)	September 2001
Breast cancer—trastuzumab (No. 34)	March 2002
Colorectal cancer (advanced)—irinotecan, oxaliplatin and raltitrexed (No. 33)	March 2002
Lymphoma (follicular non-Hodgkin's)—rituximab (No. 37)	March 2002
Ovarian cancer (advanced)—pegylated liposomal doxorubicin hydrochloride (No. 45)—obsolete, replaced by No.91	July 2002
Leukaemia (chronic myeloid)—imatinib (No. 50) obsolete, replaced by No. 70	October 2002
Breast cancer—vinorelbine (No. 54)	December 2002
Ovarian cancer—paclitaxel (review) (No. 55)	January 2003
Breast cancer—capecitabine (No. 62)	May 2003
Colorectal cancer—capecitabine and tegafur uracil (No. 61)	May 2003
Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma—rituximab (No. 65)	September 2003
Leukaemia (chronic myeloid)—imatinib (No. 70)	October 2003
Gastro-intestinal stromal tumours (GIST)—imatinib (No. 86)	October 2004
Ovarian cancer (advanced)—paclitaxel, pegylated liposomal doxorubicin hydrochloride and topotecan (review) (No. 91)	May 2005
Colorectal cancer (advanced)—irinotecan, oxaliplatin and raltitrexed (review) (No. 93)	August 2005

Care Homes (Diet)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what level of expertise and training is required of Commission for Social Care Inspection inspectors on the management of nutrition and dietary care for older people in care homes. [18939]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the chief executive of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), that CSCI has developed guidance for inspectors in consultation with dietary experts, on the management of nutrition and dietary care for older people in care homes.

As part of the continuous professional development for all inspectors, CSCI has established a learning resource centre, which gives inspectors access to a wide range of clinical and professional information. In addition, on a monthly basis specific care issues like the management of nutritional and dietary requirements are focused on, with electronic links provided to websites and articles providing updates on good practice.

Inspectors will prompt the provider of a care home to seek input for people in their care from local national health service dieticians, if nutritional issues are identified during an inspection.

The Chief of Nursing at CSCI has ongoing meeting with the nutritional advisory group for the elderly to discus a range of issues around nutrition.

Child Cancer Drugs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were treated for cancer with platinum based chemotherapy drugs in each of the last five years. [19025]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the last five years there was one prescription issued for platinum based chemotherapy drugs by the national health service. Prescription information is not collected by age and therefore we cannot say if the prescription was for a child.

Child Prescriptions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which drugs have been prescribed to children by NHS doctors in the last 12 months which have not been licensed for children. [18741]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not collect this information.

Cider and Perry

Mr. Heath: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will introduce minimum fruit content requirements for cider and perry. [19613]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Government supports the principle of mandatory ingredient listing for all alcoholic drinks and awaits proposals from the European Commission on the review of food labelling legislation, which is expected to cover this issue. Full ingredient listing would include the requirement for a quantitative declaration of any fruit juice used as an ingredient in alcoholic drinks. There are no plans for separate proposals that would require a minimum fruit content for cider and perry.

Clinical Trials

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether patients taking a medicine as part of a clinical trial have the right to continue taking the medicine if clinically appropriate following its approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency if the medicine has not been subject to an appraisal by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [18351]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 require that an application to an ethics committee for a trial must include information about plans for the treatment and care of patients once their participation in the trial has ended. The absence of an appraisal by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is not in itself a reason to stop providing a treatment to patients once a trial has ended.

Communicable Disease Control

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the responsibilities are of *(a)* health authorities and *(b)* local authorities in the area of communicable disease control. [20031]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The responsibilities of the health authorities (HAs) and local authorities (LAs) in the area of communicable disease control depends on the seriousness of the threat to health.

In England, the HAs with responsibilities are the strategic health authorities (SHAs), national health service trusts—primary care trusts (PCTs), acute hospital trusts, ambulance trusts, mental health trusts—and NHS Direct.

In the event of an extreme example of a communicable disease outbreak, for example, pandemic influenza, the SHAs are responsible for:

strategic control of any incident that affects or seems likely to affect a number of hospitals or have a significant impact on primary care;

ensuring command and control structures are in place across the NHS within its area and have been tested;

agreeing with Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the regional directors of public health (RDPHs) escalation triggers and mechanisms;

ensuring escalation policies are clearly described, and that capacity plans are available;

ensuring links within the NHS, with neighbouring SHAs, health regions or NHS boards, with RDPHs, the HPA and across into the other sectors, including social care, are effective and durable;

ensuring local provision for an influenza pandemic;

monitoring the plans of NHS organisations within its area;

they may have to clarify which routine NHS targets can be dropped or modified, ie what business will not be continued 'as usual' in the event of a pandemic disrupting normal work.

In addition, all NHS organisations should have contingency plans which cover:

the command and control structure, escalation policies and links to other sectors;

arrangements to appoint a named influenza co-ordinator, normally the director of public health, and a pandemic planning committee with appropriately wide representation;

arrangements for the optimum care for those affected, including ability to mobilise and direct health care resources to local hospitals at short notice to support them and to sustain patients in the community should hospital services be reduced or compromised for a period;

ensuring they have the appropriate facilities for infection control;

arrangements for liaison with LA colleagues and social services, including coherence of emergency plans and joint working;

arrangements to have mutual support arrangements between neighbouring NHS organisations;

arrangements to decide which routine NHS work can be dropped or modified, for example, what business will not be continued as usual. These arrangements should include appropriate bodies with lay representation to debate and agree in public difficult rationing decisions;

managing the disruption caused by influenza on other NHS services and other medical conditions;

contingency staffing arrangements for primary, acute and public health services;

arrangements to cope with staff absenteeism and increased patient loads;

arrangements to immunise and provide antiviral prophylaxis to essential staff according to United Kingdom guidelines;

plans for emergency vaccination programmes according to UK guidelines, including an estimate of local vaccine and antiviral needs and arrangements for ensuring the vaccine and antivirals are distributed and administered appropriately;

communication arrangements to healthcare professionals, the public and media, including timely cascade of information from national and international sources;

arrange to have laboratories investigate influenza like illness, isolate strains of influenza, test antimicrobial susceptibility of secondary bacterial infections and report findings for local and UK surveillance according to UK-wide agreed protocols;

ambulance trusts/special health boards may need to consider central co-ordination of all patient transfers during phase three of the response;

staff training;

a media handling strategy.

NHS Direct is responsible for developing and maintaining up to date advice algorithms for influenza, with HPA and others, and activating them when instructed by the HPA or the Department.

Similar arrangements to the above apply in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In the event of a communicable disease outbreak such as pandemic influenza, LAs in England and Wales have powers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (c.22). Key provisions include:

powers to seek orders from a justice of the peace requiring a person to be medically examined and to be removed to and detained in hospital;

powers for the local authority/its proper officer, or equivalents, to request a person not to work with a view to preventing the spread of infection, to require a child who has been exposed to infection not to attend school and to place restrictions on children's places of entertainment;

the creation of criminal offences where people expose others to the risk of infection;

some powers to require the provision of information to help control the spread of disease.

In less serious cases of communicable disease such as food poisoning outbreaks or cases of legionnaires disease, the LA environmental health officers will have responsibility for investigating the outbreak.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will set out the dates on which *(a)* the abolition of community health councils was first proposed, *(b)* the legislation abolishing community health councils secured Royal Assent, *(c)* community health councils ceased operation, *(d)* patient forums commenced operation, *(e)* the proposal to merge patient forums was first made and *(f)* she expects the mergers will be complete. [18651]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The abolition of community health councils (CHCs) was first proposed in the NHS Plan in July 2001. The National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Bill secured Royal Assent on 25 June 2002, and CHCs ceased operation on 1 December 2003.

Patient forums commenced operation on 1 December 2003. The proposal to merge patients' forums was made in the Government response to the consultation on the future support arrangements for patient and public involvement in health (PPI) published on 15 March 2005. However, the Government recommendations have been subsequently put on hold pending the results of the current strategic review of PPI.

Community Matrons

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community matrons are employed in each primary care trust in the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority area; and for how many patients they are providing treatment. [18817]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Community Pharmacies

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the terms of the community pharmacy contract stipulated an enhanced services expenditure floor to primary care trusts. [18345]

Jane Kennedy: No, it did not.

Contagious Diseases

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list occasions since 1997 when highly contagious diseases have been identified in the UK as having originated abroad, broken down by country of origin. [16704]

Caroline Flint: There is no agreed definition of the term "highly contagious". The following cases of highly contagious diseases, have been reported to the Health Protection Agency in England and Wales since 1997.

There was one confirmed case of severe acute respiratory syndrome in 2003, whose infection was acquired in Hong Kong.

There were two confirmed cases of Lassa fever since 1997, both of whom acquired their infection in Sierra Leone, one in 2000, and the other in 2003.

Since 1997, there have been 10 laboratory confirmed cases of cholera each year, with around a further 30 cases notified but not confirmed.

There have been laboratory confirmed cases of *shigellos*, which all came from abroad. These are shown in the table.

	Shigella boydii	*Shigella dysenteriae*
1997	79	49
1998	75	43
1999	70	42
2000	56	26
2001	52	31
2002	54	23
2003	94	50
2004	113	53

There have been laboratory confirmed cases of typhoid from abroad, which are shown in the table.

	S. Typhi
1997	99
1998	82
1999	94
2000	109
2001	97
2002	101
2003	118
2004	121

The information regarding country of origin is not held as a matter of routine.

Decontamination Supercentre Procurement Processes

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when further waves of the NHS decontamination supercentre procurement processes are expected to be announced; [19351]

(2) how many procurement competitions for the provision of decontamination supercentres *(a)* have been announced, *(b)* have been completed and *(c)* remain to be announced; [19354]

(3) what progress is being made with the national surgical instrument decontamination supercentre programme in England. [19392]

Jane Kennedy: The redeveloped sterile services centre based in King George's Hospital, Ilford and serving other national health service trusts in North East London, opened earlier this year. Twelve joint venture projects involving 63 NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts have advertised for private sector partners in the *Official Journal* of the European Union (OJEU) and are at various stages of the procurement. The most advanced is the project involving the Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust, which announced its preferred bidder earlier this year and is working towards awarding the contract by the end of this year. Service commencement is expected in the autumn of 2006.

Six projects involving some 20 NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts have signed collaboration agreements and are preparing outline business cases prior to advertising in the OJEU later this year. We expect a total of some 100 NHS trusts to adopt a joint venture solution within the mixed economy for sterile services. We cannot, however, be exact about those that have not yet signed collaboration agreements. We have made provision for further NHS trusts to join a collaboration up to four years after contract commencement. These projects are managed locally, with local teams taking decisions such as when to advertise in the OJEU.

Delayed Hospital Discharges

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many delayed hospital discharges there were in England in each year since 1997; [18561]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact on local authorities' performance in making provision for patients discharged into their care of fines for delays to hospital discharges in England; and if she will make a statement. [19233]

Mr. Byrne: The fining system has had a very positive effect on reducing delays, as shown in the table.

Delayed hospital discharges from 2001–02 to 2004–05

	Number
2001–02	5,473
2002–03	4,147
2003–04	2,821
2004–05	2,359

The collection of data relating to hospital discharge began in June 2001.

Dementia Care (Essex)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the Essex strategic health authority area suffer from dementia. [18082]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people were fitted with digital hearing aids in each primary care trust area in the last 12 months; [19011]

(2) how many digital hearing aids were fitted outside the NHS but paid for by the NHS in the last 12 months; [19012]

(3) what the current waiting time is for fitting a digital hearing aid from initial referral to final fitting in each area in South East England. [19022]

Mr. Byrne: Information on numbers of people fitted with digital hearing aids and on waiting times for fitting of digital hearing aids is not held centrally.

We do not collect information on the number of digital hearing aids fitted outside the national health service but paid for by the NHS. However, since the Public Private Partnership (PPP) started in October 2003, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf estimates that 50,000 extra patients will be fitted with digital hearing aids by private dispensers through the PPP initiative by the end of December 2005.

E. Coli

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of E. coli have been identified in *(a)* Southend-on-Sea and *(b)* Basildon hospital trusts over each of the last five years. [18779]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

East Sussex Hospitals Trust

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what involvement Ministers had in the appointment of the new chief executive of East Sussex Hospitals Trust; [17927]

(2) what involvement Ministers had in the departure of the previous chief executive of East Sussex Hospitals Trust. [17928]

Caroline Flint: Ministers were not involved in the departure of the previous chief executive of East Sussex Hospitals Trust, or in the appointment of the new chief executive. This is an employment matter, which was handled by the trust.

Emergency Dental Treatment

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people visited *(a)* NHS accident and emergency departments and *(b)* dental school emergency departments for emergency dental treatment in each of the last five years. [17025]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data are not collected centrally on the number of patients who visit national health service accident and emergency departments or dental school emergency department for emergency dental treatment. Data are collected on the number of patients admitted to NHS hospitals as emergencies for dental procedures. The table shows this information for each of the last five years.

Count of finished admission episodes—all operations (OPCS-4 F08-F20) dental procedures. Method of admission: emergency. NHS hospitals, England, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Finished admission episodes
1999–2000	4,376
2000–01	4,426
2001–02	4,310
2002–03	4,797
2003–04	4,984

First Aid Advice (Intoxication)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to publicise first aid advice to young people on how they should treat other young people who may be intoxicated. [18369]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

There is scope in the Personal Social and Health Education framework for schools to explore safety and emergency procedures as part of the curriculum. At Key Stage 3, the framework suggests pupils should be taught

"basic emergency procedures and where to get help and support".

At Key Stage 4 pupils should be taught to

"develop skills to cope with emergency situations that require basic aid procedures, including resuscitation techniques".

Fluoridation

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many strategic health authority areas have water fluoridation programmes in place; [17492]

(2) how many people reside in areas covered by a water fluoridation programme; and what percentage of the total population this represents. [17493]

Caroline Flint: There are 10 strategic health authorities in which all or part of the population receive water to which fluoride has been added to bring it up to a concentration of one part per million. The total population involved is about 5.5 million, some 10 per cent. of the total population of England.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the results of public opinion surveys initiated by strategic health authorities and primary care trusts on the fluoridation of the water supply. [18853]

Caroline Flint: The results of all public opinion surveys initiated by strategic health authorities and primary care trusts that we are aware of are shown in the table.

	Sponsor	*Percentage in favour of fluoridation*
1980	West Midlands Regional Health Authority	66
1985	National Association of Health Authorities	71
1987	National Association of Health Authorities	76
2000	West Midlands Regional Dental Health Promotion Group	70

Food Standards Agency

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people followed the proceedings of the meeting of the Food Standards Agency held on 15 September via the internet; what questions were raised by e-mail during that meeting; by whom the questions were raised; what answers were given; and whether she has any plans to extend provision for internet and e-mail participation in meetings and discussions of her Department and the agencies for which she is responsible. [17917]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* As part of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) commitment to openness and transparency, all its open board meetings are webcast on the internet as a matter of course. Decisions on whether to webcast other meetings are taken on a case by case basis. The board meeting held on 15 September was viewed live via the internet by at least 368 people. Other people may have watched the recording subsequently. One question was submitted by email from Chris Whitehouse of Consumers for Health Choice: 'Assuming that the Board adopts the recommendations under Item 5 in relation to the Food Supplements Directive, what specific strategy do they have for achieving the objectives specified'. This question was addressed in the question and answer session by the chief executive, who said that, if the FSA's advice was accepted by Ministers, the FSA would be seeking to influence those officials in the commission drafting the proposals on which the negotiations would be based. The full answer can be viewed at:

www.flyonthewall.com/FlyBroadcast/FSA/LondonBoard0905/.

The Department conducted its first webcast on 31 May 2005, World No Tobacco Day. The webcast, aimed at policy-makers and local groups that help smokers to quit, included coverage of the international conference held with the World Health Organisation supported by a short film showing a local stop smoking support group. This initiative was an important first step in broadening access to information and exploiting online channels. The Department's next webcast will be a first for Government. In the spirit of open government, the Department will broadcast policy making, live, from the deciding national event in the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation on improving community health and care services in Birmingham on 29 October. This webcast will give the public, national health service staff, charities and special interest groups, the chance to see 1,000 people debating and shaping future policy on health care outside hospitals. The webcast will be accessible from the Department's website live on the day and is likely to be available via the website for some time thereafter to enable the outcome to be compared with the resulting White Paper when this is published at the turn of the year.

General Practice

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from organisations representing patients about the inability to book general practitioner appointments in advance; and if she will make a statement. [17693]

Mr. Byrne: Representations have been received both from organisations and from individuals about this matter. We have made clear that it is unacceptable that some practices are continuing to deny patients the opportunity to book an appointment with a general practitioner in advance. As my noble Friend the Minister of State for Health announced on 7 September, we are therefore now taking steps to ensure that patients are offered more flexible access, including the opportunity to book ahead. At the same time, we are also now asking patients and national health service staff what more needs to be done to improve access as part of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" public consultation.

H5N1 Vaccine

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for how long the H5N1 vaccine remains viable for use after manufacture. [16909]

Caroline Flint: If stored properly, an H5N1 vaccine is likely to have a shelf life of about two years.

Health Services (Essex)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of delayed transfers of care there have been in *(a)* Southend-on-Sea and *(b)* Basildon hospitals in each of the last three years. [18084]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department collects information on the number of cases of delayed transfer at national health service trust level. The latest data on the number of cases of delayed transfers of care at Basildon and Thurrock General Hospital NHS Trust and Southend Hospitals NHS Trust are shown in the table.

	Basildon and Thurrock General Hospitals NHS Trust	*Southend Hospitals NHS Trust*
2002–03	29	43
2003–04	41	37
2004–05	20	17
2005–06	25	20

Notes:

1. These figures are based on a snapshot taken on the last typical Thursday in the year.

2. 2005–06 data are the latest available.

Source:

SitReps.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases have occurred in *(a)* Southend-on-Sea and *(b)* Basildon in each of the last three years. [18086]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the format requested. However, the best available information is from the mandatory meticillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) blood stream infections bacteraemia surveillance scheme which started in April. The data for the last three years for Southend Hospital National Health Service Trust and Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are shown in the table.

Number of cases of meticillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemias

	April 2002 to March 2003	*April 2003 to March 2004*	*April 2004 to March 2005*
Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	38	30	42
Southend Hospital NHS Trust	23	27	19

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of hepatitis have been identified in the Essex strategic health authority in each of the last three years. [18087]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The incidence of hepatitis in the Essex strategic health authority area is collected as finished consultant episodes (FCEs), the details of which are shown in the table.

	Patient count
2001–02	347
2002–03	348
2003–04	414

Notes:

1. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data is ungrossed).

2. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HESID. This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

3. Hospital episode statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 NHS trusts and primary care trusts in England. The Health and Social Care Information Centre liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data via HES processes. While this brings about improvement over time, some shortcomings remain.

Source:

HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many occupational therapists have been employed within the Essex strategic health authority in each of the last three years. [18088]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The numbers of occupational therapists that have been employed within the Essex strategic health authority (SHA) area in each of the last three years are shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified occupational therapists in the Essex SHA area by organisation as at 30 September in each specified year

Headcount

	Organisation code	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Essex SHA total	Q03	454	460	447
Primary care trusts (PCTs)				
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford PCT	5GP	13	13	10
Castle Point and Rochford PCT	5JP	1	1	[1]—
Colchester PCT	5GM	29	44	27
Epping Forest PCT	5AJ	40	50	55
Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust	RDE	32	30	32
Maldon and South Chelmsford PCT	5GL	12	19	14
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust	RQ8	27	28	26
New Possibilities NHS Trust	RDH	58	[2]—	[2]—
North Essex Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	RRD	59	86	88
South Essex Partnership NHS Trust	RWN	82	81	105
Southend Hospital NHS Trust	RAJ	19	26	27
Southend-on-Sea PCT	5AK	18	19	17
Tendring PCT	5AH	4	7	4
Thurrock PCT	5GQ	60	54	36
Witham Braintree and Halstead Care Trust	TAG	[1]—	2	6

[1] Zero.

[2] Not applicable.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

Health Staff (Duty of Care)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* doctors' and *(b)* nurses' duty of care is to patients (i) before death and (ii) after death. [18281]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The doctors' Hippocratic Oath and nurses' professional code of conduct both clearly outline the duty of care to patients that each profession has. Each national health service trust has a clear policy on how to care for both the body of a deceased patient and his or her relatives with sensitivity and respect.

Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Strategic Health Authority

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the outturn against planned expenditure for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire strategic health authority in 2005–06; and what the predicted outturn is for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08. [20424]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The latest data available on the financial position of national health service organisations—strategic health authority (SHAs), primary care trusts and NHS trusts—is for 2004–05.

The deficit for the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire SHA economy for 2004–05 was £61 million.

We are expecting a similar position in 2005–06, but we expect to see significant improvements in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what grounds HIV treatment is available free of charge to people living in England; [18671]

(2) what the policy on charging overseas visitors to the United Kingdom for HIV treatment in England is. [18672]

Jane Kennedy: Anyone who is ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom is eligible to receive national health service hospital treatment, including HIV treatment, free of charge, subject to any statutory charges that may apply, such as prescription charges.

The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended, specify that anyone who is not ordinarily resident in the UK must be treated as an overseas visitor, and is liable to pay for any NHS hospital treatment received unless they meet one of the exemption criteria in the regulations. One such exemption covers the initial diagnostic testing for HIV/AIDS and any associated counselling, so that these are free to all irrespective of residency status. Subsequent treatment, however, should the test prove positive, is not free to all and an overseas visitor who is not otherwise exempt under one of the other criteria is expected to pay for any HIV/AIDS treatment they receive.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies have contracted HIV/AIDS from their HIV positive mothers during *(a)* pregnancy and *(b)* birth in each of the last five years for which records are available. [18323]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible to distinguish between infections acquired during pregnancy and at delivery. The number of infants known to have been infected through mother to child transmission is available. Data on HIV in infants is available from the national study of HIV in pregnancy and childhood (NSHPC), the national surveillance system for diagnosed obstetric and paediatric HIV, based at the Institute of Child Health. Estimates of the total number of HIV positive women giving birth, diagnosed and undiagnosed, are available from the unlinked anonymous survey of HIV seroprevalence in pregnant women co-ordinated by the Health Protection Agency.

The numbers of infants infected by their HIV positive mothers, born in the United Kingdom since 1999 and reported to the NSHPC to date are shown in table one. This table does not include any infected children who were well following birth and have not yet been diagnosed, nor any who have been reported but whose infection status has not yet been clarified (likely to be small numbers).

Table 1: Number of babies reported to NSHPC, and confirmed infected, 1999–2004

Year of birth (UK births only)	*Maternal diagnosis before or around time of delivery*	*Diagnosis after delivery*	*Total infected*
1999	4	33	37
2000	6	42	48
2001	5	20	25
2002	12	19	31
2003	6	15	21
2004	6	10	16

Note:
Includes reports received by end of September 2005, subject to reporting delay.

Hospital Staffing

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many agency staff have been employed in the Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust *(a)* as doctors, *(b)* as nurses and *(c)* in other capacities in each of the last five years. [18013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Hypertension

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of hypertension has been in each year since 1997. [18353]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not available in exactly the form requested. The Health Survey for England records annual prevalence data, which are shown in the table.

Prevalence of high blood pressure by survey year. All adults aged 16 and over with a valid blood pressure reading and data on medication

	Percentage	*Sample size*
1998	36.5	11,884
1999	—	—
2000	36.2	5,598
2001	37.5	10,653
2002	35.4	4,829
2003	34.4	9,183

Notes:
1. Because the 1999 survey focused on the health of ethnic minorities, no results are available for the general population in England.
2. The survey defines hypertension as high blood pressure when above the threshold of 140/90 mmHg or "on treatment".
Source:
Health Survey for England.

Influenza Vaccine

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what quantities of influenza drugs her Department plans to stockpile in preparation for a potential avian influenza pandemic. [20823]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* We have ordered 14.6 million antiviral doses to treat the 25 per cent. of the population who may become ill in an influenza pandemic. Deliveries began in August and our delivery schedule indicates that the stockpile should be complete by September 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which manufacturers supply winter influenza vaccines to the NHS. [18370]

Caroline Flint: The following manufacturers supply flu vaccines: Sanofi Pasteur MSD, Chiron Vaccines, GlaxoSmithKline, MASTA, Solvay Healthcare and Wyeth Vaccines.

Details of which manufacturers are supplying flu vaccine for this year's flu campaign are provided each year in a Chief Medical Officer's letter and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/65/17/04116517.pdf.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has issued on the most effective time during the year for winter influenza vaccines to be administered to at-risk groups. [18371]

Caroline Flint: Guidance issued in "Immunisation against Infectious Disease", the "Green book", and in national health service information materials recommends that flu vaccine be given before the main flu season. We suggest that the vaccine is offered from September to early November. However, it can be given up until the time that the flu virus starts to circulate.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure continuity of supply of influenza vaccine. [18372]

Caroline Flint: General practitioner practices make their own contractual arrangements with vaccine manufacturers for the supply of seasonal flu vaccine. At the beginning of the year, departmental officials met with manufacturers to discuss supply arrangements and the number of vaccine doses required for this year's flu campaign. The Department is also purchasing a contingency stock of seasonal flu vaccine that can be made available to minimise any problem in supply to GPs.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* influenza vaccine and *(b)* H5N1 vaccine has been allocated to the Dorset and Somerset health authority area; and if she will make a statement. [19784]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* Information on influenza vaccine allocations is not held centrally or by Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority or the individual primary care trusts. Each general practice orders the amount of influenza vaccine they require based on their practice list and the number of people they have in vulnerable and at risk groups.

A tender has been issued for H5N1 vaccine, which could be offered to health care workers in the event of a pandemic. This vaccine is not currently available but the plan is to hold stocks centrally when it is delivered.

Mental Health

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in developing the provision of a mental health telephone helpline. [16978]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has committed £5 million to the Mental Health Helplines Partnership (MHHP) between 2004–05 and 2006–07. The MHHP's steering group works with the programme management board at the Department to decide on how the MHHP spends its funding.

The MHHP comprises the majority of major national and local voluntary and community sector mental health telephone helpline providers (around 50), excluding membership organisations, and MHHP organisations handle over 5 million telephone calls/contacts per year, or 99 per cent. of all calls made to mental health helplines.

In addition, NHS Direct responds to about 325,000 calls per year from people with mental health issues. NHS Direct works in close partnership with the member organisations of the MHHP.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what data the annual mapping of older people's mental health services will collect; and when *(a)* the first exercise will be completed and *(b)* the data validated. [18603]

Mr. Byrne: For the first time this year the Department will be supporting service mapping of older people's mental health services done on its behalf by Durham University's centre for applied social research. The mapping will support local commissioning discussions, in nationally benchmarking service elements alongside local activity data and improving understanding of the local service models, as well as providing the basis of a local service directory for users and carers. This exercise will commence in November 2005 and conclude on 31 March 2006 after which data will be available. It is envisaged that similar data collections will be supported annually. Finance data on older people's mental health services will also be included for the first time in this autumn's national finance mapping of mental health services.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients went to see their GP about mental health problems in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004. [18797]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not centrally available. The First National GP Survey of Mental Health in Primary Care (Mental After Care Association, 1999) reported that general practitioners spend on average 30 per cent. of their time on mental health problems. This publication is available at: www.together-uk.org/temp/GPsspandspmentalsphealthspreport.pdf.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of children who care for a mentally ill parent. [18802]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04, approximately 7,900 carers under the age of 18 in England cared for a parent with a mental illness.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government is taking to support children who care for their mentally ill parent. [18803]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have shown the importance it attaches to supporting children who care for parents with a mental illness, through the 1999 national service framework for mental health (NSFMH), the NHS Plan (2000), and the 2004 national service framework for children, young people and maternity services (NSFC).

The NSFMH sets out national standards, future aims and priorities for mental health services in England over a 10-year period. Specifically, standard six, "Caring about carers", identifies the needs of all individuals who provide substantial care for a person on a care plan approach. This is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/05/66/04090566.pdf.

The NSF is also supported by the NHS Plan (2000) which sets a target of having 700 carer support workers in place by the end of 2004: by the end of March 2005, 654 (more than 93 per cent., of this target) carer support workers were in post, which represents a very significant achievement.

Standard two of the NSFC—Supporting parenting—recognises that special circumstances exist in some families, including parental mental illness and where children may be unpaid carers. This NSF identifies the need for support to those children who are carers and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/05/66/04090566.pdf.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government have allocated to child and adolescent mental health services during each of the past three years; and how much it plans to allocate in each of the next three years. [18805]

Mr. Byrne: The available information is shown in the table. These funds are in addition to the funding included in the general resources available to the national health service and local authorities for the development of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). CAMHS funding for the national health service in 2006–07 and 2007–08 has yet to be determined. CAMHS funding in 2008–09 and thereafter will be part of the forthcoming comprehensive spending review.

CAMHS funding—2003–04 to 2007–08

£ million

	Local authority revenue	*NHS revenue*	*NHS capital*
2003–04	51.0	—	—
2004–05	67.0	20.0	20.0
2005–06	90.5	50.0	20.0
2006–07	90.5	—	—
2007–08	90.5	—	—

Funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 is subject to approval by Parliament.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many episodes of cognitive behavioural therapy have been conducted with NHS patients with mental illness in each of the last five years; [18828]

(2) how many *(a)* adults and *(b)* children received cognitive behavioural therapy treatment for mental illness in each of the last five years. [19013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not centrally available.

MMR

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doses of MMR vaccine have been purchased from overseas suppliers in the current year; broken down by *(a)* source and *(b)* cost. [18816]

Caroline Flint: The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is purchased from United Kingdom-registered companies.

New Dental School

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria she has established for universities bidding for a new dental school; what representations she has received from universities bidding to open a new dental school; and what timeframe she has put in place for the selection of a new university dental school. [17165]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The management of the Government's programme for the expansion of dental education is being undertaken by a joint implementation group (JIG) comprising representatives of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Department and the national health service. In inviting bids, the JIG set the following criteria: geographical context, innovation, quality, value for money and widening participation. Bids have been received both from universities wishing to expand their existing dental schools and from those currently without a school. The JIG will be putting its recommendations to the HEFCE in time for the board to decide the location of the additional training places at its meeting in January 2006.

NHS Funding

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations her Department has received since 2003 from *(a)* the Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* the West Suffolk

Hospital NHS Trust and *(c)* the West Suffolk Primary Care Trust requesting an increase in their NHS funding allocation. [17700]

Ms Rosie Winterton: According to departmental records, there have been no representations to the Department since 2003 from either of these organisations on this matter.

NHS Prescription Costs

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS prescriptions were made *(a)* to all people and *(b)* to people aged over 60 years for (i) chlorpromazine (largactil), (ii) thioridazine, (iii) haloperidol (seranacem, haldol, dozic), (iv) promazine (sparine), (v) flupentixol (depixol, fluanxol), (vi) olanzapine (zyprexa), (vii) pericyazine (neulactil), (viii) risperidone (risperidol), (ix) sulpiride (dolmatil, sulpitil), (x) trifluoperazine (stealazine) and (xi) clozapine (cloxaril); and if she will estimate the cost to the NHS of prescribing each of them in that year. [16484]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2004, the national health service in England prescribed antipsychotic medicines in the quantities shown in table one. The second column shows the total quantities prescribed for each medicine, aggregating all generic brands and strengths of each medicine. The third column shows the total number of prescriptions for these medicines issued to persons aged over 60 years.

The information in the third column is based on a one in 20 sample of all exempt prescriptions identified by the Prescription Pricing Authority from those dispensed by community pharmacists, appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. This information is an estimate and is subject to sampling errors. Also included are prescriptions issued in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data does not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts.

Table two shows the costs of each of these medicines to the NHS in England in 2004. These figures do not include any discounts over and above drug tariff rates, nor any dispensing costs or fees.

Table 1: Antipsychotic medicines prescribed in England in 2004

Quantity (Thousand)

Name of medicine	*Total NHS prescriptions in England*	
	In 2004	*In 2004 to patients aged over 60*
Chlorpromazine Hydrochloride	656	214.8
Thioridazine	77	40.5
Haloperidol	431	256.2
Promazine Hydrochloride	182.5	116.1
Flupentixol Hydrochloride	222.5	112.6
Olanzapine	1,375.8	459
Pericyazine	43.1	14.1
Risperidone	1,228	579
Sulpiride	213.3	82.9
Trifluoperazine	420.9	209.2
Clozapine	6.7	0.6

Table 2: Antipsychotic medicines prescribed in England in 2004

Name of medicine	*Cost to NHS (£000)*
Chlorpromazine Hydrochloride	1,389.4
Thioridazine	151.1
Haloperidol	1,997.1
Promazine Hydrochloride	525.9
Flupentixol Hydrochloride	812.2
Olanzapine	109,862.8
Pericyazine	417.6
Risperidone	48,845.5
Sulpiride	2,384.7
Trifluoperazine	1,223.3
Clozapine	742.4

NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by how many the procurement staff establishment at the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency is to be reduced; and what savings she estimates this will produce. [15376]

Jane Kennedy: The function and structure of the National Health Service Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) has been subject to a review as part of the supply chain excellence programme (SCEP)—encompassing all Department of Health and NHS purchasing and supply activity. This review was undertaken by the commercial directorate and the output has been integrated into the arm's length body review process and ratified as part of the department wide programme.

The result is that the NHS PASA has refocused an increased level of resource on procurement and procurement support operations, while maintaining an establishment unchanged at 340.8 whole-time equivalent.

While no changes have been made to the establishment, the whole organisation has been subject to radical changes in structure, resource focus and work processes. The result is a significant increase in savings available to the NHS—including a target of £250 million per annum savings arising from the national contracting programme element of SCEP.

Obesity

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary school pupils in *(a)* England, *(b)* London and *(c)* Kingston and Surbiton are identified as (i) overweight and (ii) obese. [18399]

Caroline Flint: The available information, taken from the Health Survey for England, is shown in the table. No specific figures are available for Kingston and Surbiton, but these areas are included in the figure for London.

Prevalence of child overweight and obesity among English children aged five–10 by sex

Percentage

Body mass index (BMI) status	*London Government office region*	*England*
Boys		
Overweight	7.5	14.6
Obese	23.0	16.2
Overweight including obese	30.5	30.8

Prevalence of child overweight and obesity among English children aged five–10 by sex

Percentage

Body mass index (BMI) status	*London Government office region*	*England*
Girls		
Overweight	12.5	14.3
Obese	16.3	13.3
Overweight including obese	28.9	27.6
Number of children surveyed		
Boys	76	634
Girls	63	655

Note:
UK National BMI percentile classification used to classify overweight and obesity in children.
Source:
Health Survey for England 2003

Oxygen Supply Service

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the new regional oxygen supply service to be introduced; whether its start date has been delayed; and if she will make a statement. [18335]

Jane Kennedy: The new home oxygen service is to be introduced from 1 February 2006. Legal action prevented the Department from signing contracts to allow the service to be introduced from 1 October 2005 as intended. We consulted the national health service, pharmacist representatives and the new service contractors on the earliest possible date for introducing the new service. All agreed that it should be 1 February 2006 to avoid placing undue pressures on the home oxygen service when patient demand is at its peak in the months of December and January.

Peripheral Vascular Disease

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished admission episodes relating to peripheral vascular disease there have been in each year since 1997. [18358]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Finished admission episodes—primary diagnosis—peripheral vascular disease (Please see selected codes in footnotes), national health service hospital trusts in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished admission episodes
1997–98	134,481
1998–99	142,325
1999–2000	132,208
2000–01	130,404
2001–02	122,819
2002–03	126,014
2003–04	121,464

Note:
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. The following ICD-10 codes cover or include peripheral vascular disease. In some cases, they also include vascular diseases of other sites, but it is impossible to specify further:
170.2 Atherosclerosis of arteries or extremities
172.1 Aneurysm of artery of upper extremity 172.4 Aneurysm of artery of lower extremity
173.0 Raynaud's syndrome 173.1 Thromboangiitis obliterans [Buerger]
173.8 Other specified peripheral vascular diseases
173.9 Peripheral vascular disease, unspecified
174.2 Embolism and thrombosis of arteries of upper extremities
174.3 Embolism and thrombosis of arteries of lower extremities
174.4 Embolism and thrombosis of arteries of extremities, unspecified
177.0 Arteriovenous fistula, acquired
177.1 Stricture of artery
177.2 Rupture of artery
177.3 Arterial fibromuscular dysplasia
177.5 Necrosis of artery
177.6 Arteritis, unspecified
177.8 Other specified disorders of arteries and arterioles
177.9 Disorder of arteries and arterioles, unspecified
180.0 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of superficial vessels of lower extremities
180.1 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of femoral vein
180.2 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of other deep vessels of lower extremities
180.3 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of lower extremities, unspecified
180.8 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of other sites
180.9 Phlebitis and thrombophlebitis of unspecified site
183.0 Varicose veins of lower extremities with ulcer
183.1 Varicose veins of lower extremities with inflammation
183.2 Varicose veins of lower extremities with both ulcer and inflammation
183.9 Varicose veins of lower extremities without ulcer or inflammation
187.2 Venous insufficiency (chronic) (peripheral)
187.8 Other specified disorders of veins
187.9 Disorder of vein, unspecified 4. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2003–04, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
Source:
HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Pharmacies

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on the future of *(a)* dispensing rural pharmacies and *(b)* community pharmacies; [17171]

(2) what assessment she has made of the financial viability of dispensing rural pharmacies. [17172]

Jane Kennedy: We are determined to improve access to, and the choice of, pharmacy services for patients. Community pharmacies provide a highly valued service and we are committed to their on-going development and integration in the national health service within the structure of the new contractual framework introduced from April 2005. We wish to encourage innovation and excellence in service provision while at the same time recognising the vital role community pharmacies play, particularly in poorer and rural areas.

We wish to ensure that patients are able to access the same standard of services in rural areas. Support has been available nationally through the essential small pharmacy scheme. This has, subject to certain conditions, provided a guaranteed minimum income to support a pharmacy which might otherwise be unviable.

From 1 April 2006, arrangements will change so that pharmacies within the scheme currently can either contract locally, again subject to conditions, with their NHS primary care trust for the provision of their services and continue to receive additional financial support or choose to be within the general provisions and payment system of the new contractual framework.

Public Health (Control of Disease) Act

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to review the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. [20028]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* "Getting Ahead of the Curve", the infectious disease strategy published by the Chief Medical Officer in January 2002 made clear our intention of reviewing the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

In preparation for the review, the Department has asked the Health Protection Agency (HPA) to consider how public health practitioners might make more effective use of the powers currently provided by the 1984 Act, and what difficulties practitioners find with the current powers and what changes might be desirable. We expect to receive the results of the first instalment of the HPA's work shortly, and will want to consider with the HPA at that stage when and in what form it would be appropriate to publish the results of its work.

We will decide, in the light of work by the HPA and of other developments such as the World Health Organisation's adoption of new international health regulations, how to take the review forward. Our aim will be to consider whether and how the law could be modernised to ensure protection of the public while respecting the rights of the individual. If it seems that changes to the law would be desirable, we shall of course want to consult those affected before proceeding.

Ritalin

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescriptions for Ritalin and similar drugs have been made in each of the last 20 years. [19779]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the table, which shows the total number of items dispensed in the community in England for Ritalin and similar drugs for the period 1991 to 2004.

Prior to 1991, data were collected on a sample basis only, and this is not strictly comparable with the later data.

Total number of items dispensed in the community in England since 1991

Number of items (Thousand)

	Drug Name					
	Concerta	*Equasym*	*Metadate*	*Methylphenidate HCL*	*Ritalin*	*Tranquilyn*
1991	—	—	—	—	2.00	—
1992	—	—	—	0.00	2.61	—
1993	—	—	—	0.01	3.49	—
1994	—	—	—	0.02	6.00	—
1995	—	—	—	0.00	14.69	—
1996	—	—	—	0.01	47.87	—
1997	—	—	—	0.03	92.05	—
1998	—	—	—	0.03	126.59	—
1999	—	—	—	0.04	157.92	—
2000	—	4.90	—	0.04	181.25	—
2001	0.12	27.71	—	0.05	180.57	—
2002	44.60	47.04	0.05	0.43	161.81	0.02
2003	134.92	54.47	0.01	0.34	124.51	0.22
2004	189.20	34.14	0.01	67.57	67.85	0.30

Notes:

1. Prescription information is taken from the prescription cost analysis (PCA) system, supplied by the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA), and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community i.e. by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.
2. Prescriptions are written on a prescription form. Each single item written on the form is counted as a prescription item.

Source:

PCA, PPA.

Saneline

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assist the funding of Saneline. [16979]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Voluntary and community sector organisations, including SANE, are eligible to apply for Government funding schemes aimed at the voluntary and community sector.

Seroxat

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has initiated research into the effect of Seroxat on babies in the first three months of pregnancy. [18823]

Jane Kennedy: A number of epidemiological studies have been conducted to examine potential adverse effects in babies of women who take selective serotonin

reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) antidepressants, including paroxetine (brand name Seroxat), either in the first three months of pregnancy or at any time during pregnancy. The majority of these studies have not provided evidence of an increased risk of birth defects with SSRI antidepressants such as paroxetine.

Recently, initial results from a new study conducted by the Seroxat manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline, suggest that paroxetine may increase the risk of birth defects. On receiving these new data, the Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency promptly sought expert advice from the independent scientific advisory committee, the committee on safety of medicines (CSM). The CSM has requested that further analyses should be conducted and additional information sought before a conclusion can be reached on whether or not paroxetine increases the risk of congenital malformations. In the meantime the product information for paroxetine is being updated Europe-wide to reflect these new data.

If Seroxat is taken by women in late pregnancy, it is recognised that it may cause withdrawal reactions/serotonergic effects in newborns and the product information for patients has appropriate warnings.

Current advice is that paroxetine should only be used in pregnancy when strictly indicated and only if the expected benefit to the mother is thought to be greater than any potential risk to the foetus.

Smoking

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of *(a)* the number of under-18s in England who are smokers and *(b)* the percentage of underage smokers who come from smoking households. [18396]

Caroline Flint: The data are not available in the requested form. Table one shows the estimated number of smokers, to the nearest hundred thousand, for the age groups 11–15 and 16–19. This uses the most recent data available.

Table 1: Estimated number of smokers aged 11–15 and 16–19, England 2004

Age	Estimated prevalence (percentage)[1,2]	Estimated population[3]	Estimated number of smokers (nearest 100,000)	Bases	
				Unweighted	Weighted (000)
11–15	9	3,252,238	300,000	9,618	n/a
16–19	25	2,611,397	700,000	784	2,006

Note:
Due to the small sample sizes for given age ranges in the General Household Survey (GHS), data is given for 16–19 rather than under 18s. This is the format of the reporting in the GHS.

Sources:
[1] NatCen NFER Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004
[2] Office for National Statistics (ONS) The General Household Survey 2003–04
[3] ONS mid-year population estimates, 2004 (based on the 2001 census).

77 per cent. of regular smokers aged 11–15 come from a smoking household. This is shown in table two.

Table 2: Smoking status of secondary school children aged 11–15, by smoking status of household, England 2004

Percentage

	Non-smoking household	Smoking household	Total	Bases
Not answered	47	53	100	81
Regular smoker	23	77	100	808
Occasional smoker	43	57	100	514
Non smoker	58	42	100	8,026
Total	55	45	100	9,431

Note:
A smoking household is defined here as one in which there are one or more smokers other than the pupil.

Source:
NatCen NFER Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004.

Sperm Count

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the average sperm count among UK males in each year from 1976. [17343]

Caroline Flint: No estimate has been made of the average sperm count amongst United Kingdom males as this information is not collected centrally.

St. Albans and Harpenden PCT

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's assessment is of the provision of genito-urinary medicine within St. Albans; and if she will make a statement. [18283]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Commissioning of these services is a matter for the local primary care trust. The Department has commissioned the Medical Foundation for Aids and Sexual Health to undertake a review of every genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic in the country and St. Albans will receive a visit in due course. Between 2002–03 and 2005–06, the Department has invested an extra additional £176,000 for improvements in access to GUM services within St. Albans. Waiting times data show an improvement in the percentage of people being seen within 48 hours by the GUM clinic in St. Albans, which is shown in the table.

Percentage of people seen within 48 hours by the GUM clinic in St. Albans

	November 2004	May 2005
Male	48	55
Female	42	58

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospital trusts in the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority area are operating a freeze on recruitment of medical staff. [19001]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter for individual trusts in the Surrey and Sussex area. The Department *does not hold this* information.

Utilities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice and regulations govern the purchase of electricity and gas by NHS organisations; and whether such advice is issued by *(a)* individual NHS organisations, *(b)* strategic health authorities and *(c)* her Department. [18072]

Jane Kennedy: Approximately 85 per cent. of gas and electricity is purchased via centrally arranged contracts arranged by the national health service Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA), which provides advice and guidance on several different options for procuring gas and electricity.

The purchase of gas and electricity is carried out in accordance with European Union procurement legislation, with the actual purchase decision being taken by trusts.

A recent review of best practice for energy procurement found that the procurement techniques used by NHS PASA are in line with best practices used by both the private and public sector.

Weight Management Clinics

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list primary care bodies which have set up weight management clinics; [18997]

(2) how many general practitioners have set up weight management clinics. [18998]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not held centrally. However, the Department has asked strategic health authorities to develop plans in line with the public service agreement target to "halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole". Action to manage, prevent and treat obesity in the national health service is set out in the White Paper "Choosing Health".

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is preparing definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity. This is due in early 2007. Meanwhile, in order to help and support primary care trusts on improving obesity services, the Department is developing tools such as a weight loss guide, obesity care pathway and obesity toolkit, due for publication at end of 2005. There are also seven adult and seven child NHS obesity clinics in England.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care bodies monitor the prevalence of obesity. [18999]

Caroline Flint: From 2005 06, for the first time, all strategic health authorities (SHAs) and primary care trusts (PCTs) are required to return performance monitoring data on the obesity status of adults registered with general practitioners, as part of the national health service local delivery plan process. To monitor obesity in primary care, it is important that levels of recording are as complete as possible. Initially therefore, SHAs/PCTs will be assessed against improvements in levels of primary care recording of adult obesity status.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 25 October 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

CAP

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Prime Minister on the future of the common agricultural policy. [20376]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State discusses important policy issues frequently with the Prime Minister and her other Cabinet colleagues.

Cattle Passports

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many applications for cattle passports were rejected for being out of time in each year since 2000. [19427]

Jim Knight: The 27-day deadline for submitting a cattle passport application is a requirement of the Cattle Identification Regulations 1998. It has been strictly enforced since 21 November 2003. Before that date, a less rigorous approach was taken.

Applications received after the deadline are rejected. However the animals are registered on the Cattle Tracing System and are fully traceable.

In the period from 28 September 1998 to 20 November 2003, a total of 5,832 passport applications were rejected because they were not received within the legal time limits and the identity and traceability of the animal could not be established. These figures cannot be broken down into years.

The number of applications rejected since 21 November 2003 is as follows:

	Rejected[1]
2003	3,552
2004	20,869
2005[2]	10,058

[1] These figures do not include applications which were late but also failed validation for various other reasons. For example dam calf validation problems, for instance calved too soon, or lack of mandatory info e.g. breed or sex.
[2] Up to 16 October 2005.

Coastal Defences

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what forms of renewable soft sea defences, other than groynes and shingle banks, are being employed for coastal protection around the English coastline. [19966]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England, funds most of the Environment Agency's flood management activities (including for flooding from the sea) and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to local authorities for their coastal defence improvement projects. Defra does not build defences, direct the authorities on which specific projects to undertake nor in general specify the materials and techniques to be used.

The Government encourage authorities to consider a variety of options when considering solutions. A key point is that authorities should work with natural processes wherever possible and the use of beaches to absorb wave energy is a widely used "soft" technique. However, Defra does not hold information centrally on the various other techniques that might be in use and I regret that I cannot answer the question in more detail without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of *(a)* environmental impact assessments, *(b)* permissions and *(c)* licences for (i) remedial work to existing coastal defences in Suffolk and (ii) emergency reinforcement work to existing coastal defences in Suffolk has been in each of the past five years. [19968]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency estimates their expenditure on gaining permissions, licences and environmental impact assessments as *(a)* £2,000 per year for remedial works (largely staff costs linked to consultation with external bodies such as English Nature regarding the annual maintenance programme); and *(b)* £4,000 per year for emergency reinforcement works (staff costs seeking permissions such as Food and Environment Protection Act licences, English Nature consents, plus collaborative survey work to inform operational work).

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* average and *(b)* fastest rate of coastline erosion is along unprotected parts of the Suffolk coast. [19969]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for coastal erosion risk in England and grant aids individual local authority improvement projects to reduce this risk but does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on which specific projects to undertake. Management of coastal erosion risk and associated monitoring is the responsibility of the relevant local authority in each area. The information requested is not held by Defra.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long she expects the existing coastal defences at Sizewell to remain viable. [19965]

Mr. Morley: I understand the Environment Agency is responsible for 0.5 km of flood defence at Sizewell Village. This is dune with good beach, and stable at present. The shoreline management plan has a "hold the line" policy for this frontage.

The power station is protected to a 1:10,000 standard. That is, it is protected against all events except those with a probability of occurrence in any one year of less

than 1 in 10,000. I understand British Energy owns this defence and has regular liaison meetings with the agency. The environmental risks associated with the site flooding dictate that the defences must remain viable until such time as the site is deemed safe.

North of the power station to Minsmere cliffs is an Environment Agency responsibility and defences are the subject of the current Minsmere sea defence study. Re-alignment of defences is a possibility in 60 to 100 years on current erosion rates. Present standards of defence range from 1:2–10 to 1:200. Residual life is currently considered to be between 25 years and 1,000 years for different sections. There are secondary defences in place for the defences of lower standard which provide a minimum of 40 to 60 years residual life.

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the grants available for the installation and use of combined heat and power equipment. [19728]

Mr. Morley: Defra's Community Energy programme is the only direct grant support for CHP and we are currently developing a £10 million extension. There are additionally a number of fiscal measures which benefit CHP schemes. These include exemption from the climate change levy for fuel inputs and electricity outputs and the extension in Budget 2005 of the 5 per cent. VAT rate to all domestic micro-CHP appliances. We are additionally assessing a range of measures through the current review of the Climate Change programme.

Consultancy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many consultants her Department employs; and how much has been spent on consultants in each year since 1997. [17563]

Jim Knight: Defra came into being in June 2001. Information on consultancy expenditure prior to this date can only be identified at disproportionate cost. I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to my hon. Friend the member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 35–36W, and on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1962–63W.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17991]

Jim Knight: The Department does not keep a central record of the type of tyres which are fitted to vehicles for which it is responsible.

Farm Regulation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last met the president of the Country Land and Business Association to discuss the impact of regulations on farm businesses; and what the outcome was. [20594]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, last met with Mark Hudson, the president of the Country Land and Business Association on 17 May, when a number of issues were discussed.

I have met Mr. Hudson on several occasions since then and discussed issues of concern to the Association's members.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with tenant farmers and their representatives concerning the implications of delays in single farm payments. [18454]

Jim Knight: Officials from Defra and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) meet representatives of both the Tenant Farmers' Association (TFA) and the National Farmers' Union (NFU) on a regular basis and the two organisations are represented on RPA's Industry Forum, which last met on 19 October 2005. RPA also has a Single Payment Scheme (SPS) technical stakeholders' group which meets frequently, most recently on 9 September and 17 October 2005. Again, both the TFA and the NFU are represented on this group.

There are also regular bilateral contacts with both organisations to discuss the implementation of the SPS and the associated implications for tenants and farmers in general. Lord Bach, Under-Secretary with responsibility for Sustainable Food and Farming, last met the TFA on 28 June 2005 and the President of the NFU on 28 September 2005 and Johnston McNeill, chief executive of RPA, met with the chief executive of the TFA on 29 September 2005.

RPA announced in January of this year that SPS payments were most likely to commence in February 2006; well within the regulatory payment window which runs to June 2006. During the course of regular discussion with industry representatives RPA officials have re-affirmed that they remain on course to start payments in February.

Fuel Poverty

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of recent fuel price rises on fuel poverty; and if she will make a statement. [20311]

Mr. Morley: In our publication "The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy: Third Annual Progress Report" in July 2005, it was estimated that, excluding consideration of energy efficiency improvements, recent price increases are likely to have increased the number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty in England by up to 400,000 households between 2003 and 2006.

It is critical that the impact of rising prices on fuel poverty is kept under close scrutiny. The Government are committed to doing this and considering whether further action may be needed. Moreover, together with colleagues across Government, we are working with energy companies in seeking to mitigate the impact of rising prices for the most vulnerable customers.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group's estimate of the expenditure needed to achieve Government fuel poverty targets by 2010; and what her Department's estimate is of the resources required for this purpose. [21254]

Mr. Morley: We are grateful to the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for their analysis and are currently considering their estimates regarding the level of resource required to meet our 2010 fuel poverty targets, in conjunction with the Government's own analysis.

We are committed to continuing to monitor closely the impact of rising prices and, together with colleagues across Government, to work with energy companies in seeking to mitigate their impact for the most vulnerable customers.

GM-free Zones

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the powers of the EU Commission to overrule the wish of member states to declare GM-free zones or regions following the recent European Court decision. [20770]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Under existing EU law, in order to declare a GM-free zone, that is a region where GM crops cannot be cultivated, a member state has to prove that there are special reasons to introduce national measures. Austria applied for a derogation from Directive 2001/18/EC to declare the region of Upper Austria a GM-free zone. However, the European Court of Justice ruled against this measure, as the Austrian Government failed to prove that the region of Upper Austria had a unique ecosystem which might justify a specific local risk assessment.

EU law, as agreed by EU member states, sets out procedures which allow an individual GM crop to be approved for cultivation throughout the whole of the EU only if a detailed assessment confirms that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to health or the environment. Under current EU law, as agreed by EU member states, the only legitimate grounds for narrowing the geographical scope of an approval to prevent cultivation in a defined zone are the production of clear evidence that the GM crop involved poses a particular risk to the specific area in question. In the Austrian case, the European Court of Justice found that Austria had not demonstrated the existence of any such risks to the region of Upper Austria.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department has spent on external media relations in each month of the last year. [14673]

Jim Knight: Over the last year Defra's Communications Directorate has spent the following on external media relations:

Agency	*Cost (£)*	*Project*	*Date*
Media Moguls	261,558.70	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 1	July 2004-March 2005
Media Moguls	22,362.31	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 2	August 2005-present
Amazon Public Relations	55,904.84	Launch of the Sustainable Development Strategy	January 2005-May 2005
Amazon Public Relations	18,750	Sustainable Development case studies	August 2005 to date

Both agencies provided specialist skills and services not currently available within Defra's Communications Directorate.

Milk

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the retail price of a litre of liquid milk. [20510]

Jim Knight: The retail price of liquid milk is for the market to determine and it varies depending on the outlet (e.g. supermarket, corner shop or convenience store). It includes costs for production, processing, packaging and transport.

New Reservoirs

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many new reservoirs *(a)* have been built since 1997, *(b)* are in the course of construction and *(c)* are planned to be built; and what steps she is taking to ensure that future demand for water is met. [20971]

Mr. Morley: No major public water supply reservoirs have been built since 1997 or are currently under construction. In fulfilment of their duties to maintain adequate supplies of water, several water companies propose to enlarge existing reservoirs (three in total) or construct new ones (five in total). These proposals were set out in the 25-year water resources plans they prepared in 2004. The Environment Agency has advised Ministers about the appropriateness of these proposals and other measures to ensure security of supply in its report "Maintaining water supplies", which was published in July 2004.

The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. As part of the agency's management role it has national and regional water resource strategies which set out the pressures over the next 25 years. Water companies have water resource plans that complement the agency's strategies and seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. These water resource plans are produced voluntarily, every five years, at present but will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003.

Organic Food Labelling

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department plans to publish its recommendations for the labelling threshold for organic food. [19978]

Jim Knight: The European Commission is expected soon to propose an amendment to Council Regulation 2092/91 to clarify the threshold to be applied for GM presence in organic food. We will consult stakeholders on that proposal, exploring with them what the appropriate threshold might be.

Pollution (Bystander Exposure)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on bystander exposure. [20467]

Mr. Morley: The Government will need to consider the report and its recommendations fully. Defra will be addressing the recommendations in the coming weeks and months and will co-ordinate a Government response by next summer.

Queen's Flight

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many officials accompanied her each time she used the Queen's flight in the last 12 months. [15683]

Margaret Beckett: Usually the Queen's flight is full to capacity, though the number of officials on board can vary depending on the timing of meetings of officials which often differ from those of Ministers.

Regionally Distinct Food

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to promote regionally distinct food. [21546]

Jim Knight: We have recently announced a further £2 million of funding for the implementation of the Government's Regional Food Strategy. Currently, Food from Britain (FFB) are delivering, on behalf of and funded by Defra, the final year of a three-year national programme of support for the quality regional food sector.

The £1 million a year funding has supported a raft of measures to strengthen the sector, including tasking the Regional Food Groups to encourage uptake of the Protected Food Names Schemes, which has resulted in a number of new applications to protect our regionally distinct food. In May, FFB organised a Protected Food Name Scheme seminar to bring together producers and key stakeholders with the objective of educating, informing and stimulating further uptake of the scheme.

I am pleased to say that all this effort is yielding some positive results. To date, 36 UK products have been registered so far including Stilton Cheese, Cornish Clotted Cream and West Country Farmhouse Cheddar. A further 21 applications are being considered. Although this is lower than some of the southern European member states who have a much longer tradition of using geographical indications and, arguably, a structure and culture of production more attuned to their protection, it does compare well with quite a number of other member states.

Further information, including details of all UK registered protected food names can be found on our website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodrin/foodname/intro.htm

Rights of Way (Appeals)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *appeals there have been against designations as a right* of way under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, broken down by local authority area. [21144]

Jim Knight: There is no provision for appeal against designation as a right of way under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

On the assumption that the question seeks the number of appeals in relation to the mapping of land as open country and registered common land under Part I (Right of Access) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the information we have is as follows.

Area	*Number of appeal decisions made*
South East	131
Lower North West	630
Central South	480
Upper North West	716
North East	300
South West	435
West	288
East	193

We do not hold figures on the total number of appeals submitted, only the number of appeal decisions made. Nor do we have the figures broken down by local authority area. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

River Minsmere

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what environmental impact assessments have been conducted as to the likely effects of the reopening of a river mouth for the Minsmere river to *(a)* Eastbridge and Lower Abby and *(b)* the coastline five miles south of Minsmere. [19964]

Mr. Morley: I understand that no such environmental impact assessments have been done but that the Environment Agency is undertaking a study into sea defences at Minsmere which should be complete next summer.

Sewage Odour Minimisation

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to minimise odours before sewage is spread on farmland, with particular reference to Gravesham. [19802]

Mr. Morley: The storage of sewage sludge to be spread on land is regulated by the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994, as amended. These allow exemptions from the need for a waste management licence, provided certain criteria are met. There is an over-riding requirement that the activity should not

endanger human health and not use processes or methods which could harm the environment or cause nuisance through noise or odours.

Local authorities have a duty under Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to deal with statutory nuisances. If satisfied that the odour amounts to a statutory nuisance, the local authority must serve a notice requiring the abatement of the nuisance or prohibiting or restricting its recurrence. The non-statutory Code of Practice for the Agricultural Use of Sewage Sludge also makes recommendations relating to odour.

Neither the Department nor the Environment Agency are aware of any particular issues in the Gravesham area relating to the storage or spreading of sewage sludge.

Sustainable Procurement Task Force

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2418W, on the civil service, how the work of the Sustainable Procurement Task Force will take into account the recommendations of the Gershon Report. [20657]

Mr. Morley: The Sustainable Procurement Task Force was set up in May 2005, and will report jointly to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, by April 2006.

Value for money policy and the Efficiency Review should not present a barrier to sustainable procurement. Sustainable procurement and efficient procurement should be mutually re-enforcing, because Departments are encouraged to procure goods and services which offer the best value for money over the lifetime of the contract rather than lowest price.

Defra is working alongside OGC to ensure that the Gershon review recommendations are reflected in the Sustainable Procurement Task Force National Action Plan.

Timber

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will promote a ban on illegally felled timber at EU level. [19979]

Mr. Morley: The European Commission published its Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan on illegal logging in May 2003. This describes a package of measures, including proposals that the EU enters into partnership agreements with timber producing countries to establish a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU.

It also proposed that the Commission would look at other options to tackle illegal logging, including using Government procurement and banning the importation of all illegal timber to the EU which the UK strongly favours.

Government believe that as a first step to address illegal logging, it is necessary to build consensus with producing countries and make sure that we do not discriminate against legitimate trade. The EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation, with its innovative approach of bilateral trade agreements and development assistance for improving forest governance, will achieve this in the first instance.

However the Government have not lost sight of the need to look at other options to tackle illegal logging and we await the European Commission's report on additional options that will allow us to take this work forward.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on, or been a party to, the effect of illegal logging on (i) international forests, (ii) wildlife and (iii) indigenous peoples; and if she will make a statement. [19980]

Mr. Morley: The UK, together with other EU and G8 countries, has been working on solutions to the problems of illegal logging and the associated trade in illegally harvested timber for several years. This work, much of it supported by funding from the Department for International Development (DFID), has sought to understand the severity and scale of the problem, and also the consequences of possible solutions in order to inform policy development. Most relevant research is displayed on the independent website run by the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House and supported by the Department for International Development (DFID): www.illegal-logging.info

Some examples of recent research are illustrated as follows:

(i) International Forests

It is difficult to make exact measurements of the scale of illegal logging and estimates must be based on indirect data. The Government have therefore contributed to an international study on discrepancies in trade statistics, co-ordinated by the International Tropical Timber Organisation, as well as specific studies of the scale of illegal logging in Indonesia and NW Russia. These studies combined trade data with techniques such as remote sensing, and have also looked at the consequences of illegal logging for the economies of the countries concerned.

The Government have also led on research to evaluate potential solutions. These studies have looked at the compliance with WTO rules of possible trade measures, the applicability of anti-money laundering legislation, and the role of improved due diligence by the financial community in evaluating forest sector investments. Studies of the impacts on markets of measures currently being implemented to tackle the problem, for example the UK's public timber procurement policy, are currently under way—and these indicate that our policies are effective, not only in changing the market here, but also in improving enforcement in timber producing countries.

(ii) Wildlife

The Government are committed to achieving the international biodiversity target to 'significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010' which was agreed by heads of state at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs funds a range of forestry projects under the Darwin Initiative many of which include monitoring of forest habitat. Defra has also recently commissioned a new research project to investigate the impacts of UK consumption internationally. The first stage of the project will cover aspects of habitat destruction, including illegal logging, as part of the wider evaluation.

(iii) Finally, in terms of measuring the impacts of illegal logging on local communities the Department for International Development (DFID) is also supporting an international research project on the impacts of illegal logging and of measures to enforce existing laws on poor people in several countries. Preliminary results indicate that, in some cases, current laws may actually discriminate against poor forest-dependent communities and legislative reform must go hand-in-hand with better enforcement.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will increase the penalties for persons and companies convicted of importing illegally felled timber. [19981]

Mr. Morley: Currently there is no legislation in place to prohibit importing illegal timber into the UK, with the exception of unlicensed species included on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

However, the Government anticipate that a draft EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation, which will prohibit the entry into the EU of illegal timber products from countries that enter into Partnership Agreements with the European Union, will be finalised soon. This will allow penalties to be imposed on the import of illegal timber for the first time.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for International Development about promoting alternatives to illegal timber felling in countries where this is prevalent. [19986]

Mr. Morley: The UK's programme to tackle illegal logging relies on close co-operation between a number of Government Departments including the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Recent discussions between the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Secretary of State for International Development have included, co-hosting a joint meeting of G8 Environment and Development Ministers on 17–18 March. G8 Ministers agreed a range of actions to tackle illegal logging—both through working with timber producing countries to promote alternatives to illegal timber felling and, as major timber consumers to tackle their consumption of illegally logged timber.

The Departments also work together closely on the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) dossier. This will allow the EU to enter into agreements with poor timber producing countries providing them with assistance to tackle illegal logging. This assistance will include a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU, which will be reinforced by powers for Customs to deny access to unlicensed products from partner countries.

Warm Front

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Batley and Spen constituency have received assistance under the Warm Front Scheme in each of the last five years. [19653]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in Batley and Spen are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000–01	345
2001–02	713
2002–03	775
2003–04	538
2004–05	674
Total	3,045

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Overseas Aid (Corruption)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what benchmarking information his Department requires from those countries which receive aid from the UK on their progress in *(a)* controlling corruption and *(b)* improving governance. [21379]

Hilary Benn: Progress by developing countries in improving governance and controlling corruption is central to success in eliminating poverty. It is vital that we ensure that aid funds are used for the purpose intended, and are not misused through corruption.

Assessing overall progress on improving governance is central to our approach in allocating aid between countries, and planning our operations in each country. We draw on indices created by the World Bank and others, as well as conducting our own analysis.

When we are considering providing aid through countries' own budgets, we conduct a comprehensive fiduciary risk assessment, which includes an assessment of the risk of corruption and of the government's commitment to improving wider governance systems. In making these assessments we draw evidence from the partner government and other sources including audit reports, Public Accounts Committee reports, national

public accounts, service delivery surveys, budget execution reports, financial tracking studies, poverty expenditure tracking surveys and poverty reduction strategy progress reports. DFID is supporting the development of stronger international benchmarks on public financial management through the Public Expenditure Financial Accountability Programme (PEFA).

Where it is not appropriate to provide resources through countries' own budgets, we may provide aid to governments in the form of projects (where DFID has greater control over procurement, expenditure and audit processes), or through non-government channels.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1045W, on the UN Convention Against Corruption, whether he expects the UK will ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption by the end of 2005; what the timetable is for the ratification; what the schedule is for introducing Orders in Council under Part Eleven of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; what consultation has taken place with the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly in relation to corresponding orders being produced; what the schedule is for introducing these orders; and if he will make a statement. [21766]

Mr. Thomas: The UK anticipates we will ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption this year. The Department for International Development has not had any consultation with the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly in relation to corresponding orders as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for the overall ratification process and the Home Office is responsible for the Orders in Council in respect of Part 11 of the Proceeds of Organised Crime Act 2002.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Alcohol-related Crime

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions for alcohol-related crime have been brought in Thames Valley in each year since 1997. [9979]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to identify the number of prosecutions of alcohol-related crime, as the individual circumstances of the offence are not collected.

Handcuffs (Exports)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 3W, on handcuffs (exports), what criteria the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office used in making its decision that there should not be a prosecution. [20864]

The Solicitor-General: Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office used the criteria set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors in making its decision about prosecution in this case.

The Code is a publicly available document, which gives guidance on general principles to be applied in determining whether cases should be prosecuted and the choice of charge.

The Code Test has two stages. The first stage is consideration of the evidence. If the case does pass the evidential stage, prosecutors must decide if a prosecution is needed in the public interest.

At the evidential stage prosecutors must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a "realistic prospect of conviction" against each defendant on each charge. They must consider what the defence case may be, and how that is likely to affect the prosecution case.

A realistic prospect of conviction is an objective test. It means that a jury or bench of magistrates or judge hearing a case alone, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged.

Prosecutors must consider the public interest in each case where there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. A prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors tending against prosecution which clearly outweigh those tending in favour. RCPO will only start a prosecution if a case has passed both tests.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

After-class Tutoring

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimates she has made of the percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school teachers who participate in after-class tutoring (i) at their school of employment and (ii) at another venue. [20967]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which neighbourhood drop-in centres offer tutoring and homework help for primary school age children, in *(a)* London and *(b)* Kingston and Surbiton, broken down by those centres that are Government funded. [21043]

Phil Hope: The Department does not hold this information on neighbourhood drop in centres.

A-levels

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils have re-taken A-level modules *(a)* once and *(b)* more than once in each of the last five years, broken down by subject. [20586]

Jacqui Smith: The department does not hold information on the number of students re-taking modules at A Level.

Child Abuse

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines are available for teachers on how *(a)* to prevent and *(b)* to report child abuse; and if she will make a statement. [21073]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 24 October 2005]*: My Department has issued two guidance documents for all local authority education departments, schools (including independent schools) and FE colleges in England. "Safeguarding Children in Education", explains the duty, roles and responsibilities placed upon them by sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 to carry out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. "Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings" underpins on-line training introduced in response to Sir Michael Bichard's recommendation that head teachers and school governors should receive training to ensure that the process of appointing staff reflects the importance of safeguarding children.

Guidance on what action practitioners, including those in the education service, should take if they have concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused is contained in 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused". In addition, "Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service" sets out the circumstances under which people may be reported to the Secretary of State on grounds of misconduct.

The Government take the issue of child welfare and safety very seriously. We believe we need to make safeguarding everyone's business. Encouraging all organisations to have good systems and clear guidance in place forms a vital part of this. Local and national guidance for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children is based upon the provisions set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. We are currently consulting on the Government's main guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children" which sets out the overarching systems and roles that different agencies play in keeping children safe.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to increase public awareness of child abuse; and if she will make a statement. [21288]

Maria Eagle: The Government's principal role is in increasing awareness of child abuse among people who work with children. Our guidance documents, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' set out the roles and responsibilities of practitioners who work with children to promote children's welfare and safeguard them from harm. A range of voluntary organisations, including the NSPCC and ChildLine, play a vital role in increasing public awareness of child abuse.

Class Sizes

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the percentage of classes in key stage 1 over the statutory maximum class size of 30; what the percentage was in academic year 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [16937]

Jacqui Smith: In January 2005, 1.2 per cent. of all key stage 1 classes had more than 30 pupils in them. In January 1997 the comparable figure was 29.0 per cent. and in January 2001 it was 2.3 per cent.

The majority of key stage 1 classes over 30 have exceeded the statutory limit to accommodate permitted exceptions, such as children who move into an area after the start of term who would have a long journey to the next school with places available. However, my officials are contacting local authorities to discuss those classes which are illegally large, to ensure that the required measures are taken to reduce them.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size for each primary school in Romford was in each of the past 10 years. [20796]

Jacqui Smith: The available information relating to the average for all primary school classes is shown in the table. Parliamentary constituency data are not available prior to 1997.

Maintained primary schools: Average class size taught by one teacher[1]—position as at January each year: 1997 to 2005—Romford parliamentary constituency

LEA	*Estab.*	*School name*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
		England	27.5	27.7	27.5	27.1
		Romford parliamentary constituency	27.7	27.6	27.8	27.6
311	2007	Ardleigh Green Infant School	28.8	29.0	29.6	29.6
311	2006	Ardleigh Green Junior School	28.2	30.0	30.0	30.2
311	2038	Clockhouse Infant School	26.9	28.4	29.3	30.1
311	2037	Clockhouse Junior School	28.7	27.9	28.2	27.7
311	2040	Crowlands Infant School	26.1	27.4	26.8	26.4
311	2039	Crowlands Junior School	24.0	26.1	24.1	23.8
311	2042	Crownfield Infant School	27.1	24.9	26.3	26.4
311	2041	Crownfield Junior School	27.4	30.1	24.8	28.0
311	3000	Dame Tipping Church of England Primary School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
311	2069	Gidea Park Primary School	28.8	28.0	27.6	28.5
311	2045	Gobions Primary School	28.5	30.4	27.0	25.8
311	2005	Harold Wood Primary School	27.2	27.2	29.1	26.8
311	2063	The Manor Primary School	26.4	28.1	27.0	27.3
311	2052	Mawney Infants' School	26.8	25.6	n/a	n/a
311	2051	Mawney Junior School	25.1	26.0	n/a	n/a
311	2092	The Mawney School	n/a	n/a	28.3	27.6
311	2086	Nelmes Primary School	23.3	23.3	27.7	23.6

Maintained primary schools: Average class size taught by one teacher[1] — position as at January each year: 1997 to 2005 — Romford parliamentary constituency

LEA	Estab.	School name	1997	1998	1999	2000
311	2056	Parklands Infant School	28.7	28.3	29.3	30.7
311	2055	Parklands Junior School	27.4	28.2	28.9	29.4
311	2091	Pinewood Primary School	26.9	24.1	26.9	24.8
311	2060	Rise Park Infant School	30.8	30.3	30.2	30.2
311	2059	Rise Park Junior School	33.1	24.0	25.3	25.7
311	2062	Squirrels Heath Infant School	27.4	27.8	28.1	29.9
311	2061	Squirrels Heath Junior School	28.8	28.7	28.5	25.6
311	3301	St. Edward's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	29.6	29.2	27.9	28.1
311	3503	St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School	28.0	28.5	28.5	28.6
311	3507	St. Peter's Catholic Primary School	30.0	30.1	30.0	29.9

LEA	Estab.	School name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
		England	26.7	26.3	26.3	26.2	26.2
		Romford Parliamentary Constituency	27.4	27.2	26.9	28.0	26.5
311	2007	Ardleigh Green Infant School	29.0	29.8	29.7	29.7	29.9
311	2006	Ardleigh Green Junior School	30.1	29.9	29.9	29.4	29.7
311	2038	Clockhouse Infant School	30.8	31.1	29.4	30.9	29.2
311	2037	Clockhouse Junior School	28.3	25.9	30.0	29.5	29.1
311	2040	Crowlands Infant School	26.5	27.9	28.1	28.8	27.9
311	2039	Crowlands Junior School	25.9	21.8	24.3	29.1	22.6
311	2042	Crownfield Infant School	25.6	25.1	26.2	28.6	26.1
311	2041	Crownfield Junior School	29.0	28.0	29.3	25.3	24.9
311	3000	Dame Tipping Church of England Primary School	n/a	25.3	26.0	25.3	26.5
311	2069	Gidea Park Primary School	29.0	22.8	21.0	28.4	20.7
311	2045	Gobions Primary School	20.6	8.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
311	2005	Harold Wood Primary School	26.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
311	2063	The Manor Primary School	22.8	26.9	27.5	27.0	25.4
311	2052	Mawney Infants' School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
311	2051	Mawney Junior School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
311	2092	The Mawney School	24.1	25.5	21.4	27.6	24.2
311	2086	Nelmes Primary School	24.5	26.1	23.0	25.4	24.5
311	2056	Parklands Infant School	29.5	29.8	29.8	29.7	29.4
311	2055	Parklands Junior School	29.3	29.6	29.6	30.3	29.8
311	2091	Pinewood Primary School	25.7	30.0	25.6	23.4	26.1
311	2060	Rise Park Infant School	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.8	27.8
311	2059	Rise Park Junior School	28.4	23.3	24.3	31.9	24.8
311	2062	Squirrels Heath Infant School	29.0	27.7	27.0	27.1	25.4
311	2061	Squirrels Heath Junior School	25.8	27.9	27.5	27.1	25.2
311	3301	St. Edward's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	29.2	29.0	26.8	27.1	27.3
311	3503	St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School	28.9	28.4	28.5	27.7	27.6
311	3507	St. Peter's Catholic Primary School	29.1	28.7	29.1	28.7	28.3

n/a = not applicable.
[1] Classes as taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census.

Cricket

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to encourage the playing of cricket in state schools. [21061]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are committed to increasing the amount of physical education and sport in schools. This includes competitive team games such as cricket.

Cricket may be taught to pupils in schools as part of the programme of study for games activities within National Curriculum PE. Games activities must be taught to all pupils in key stages 1–3 (age 5–14) and are optional at key stage 4 (age 14–16).

We have made cricket one of 22 key sports within the School Club Links workstrand of our National Strategy for PE and School Sport. This workstrand seeks to enhance existing, and create new, links between schools and sports clubs, and to increase the number of school children being guided into National Governing Body affiliated sports clubs.

The 2004/05 PE and School Sport Survey of schools in School Sport Partnerships found that cricket was the second most popular sport (behind football) for which schools had formal links with sports clubs, with 46 per cent. of schools having links with a local cricket club. The survey also found that 85 per cent. of schools provided cricket for their pupils, either in lesson time or after school. This was the sixth most popular sport provided in schools. Copies of the results of the survey have been placed in the House Libraries.

Educational Attainment

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what initiatives her Department has launched to raise attainment in deprived areas; what the cost has been of such initiatives; and what evaluation she has made of their effectiveness. [19199]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's principal initiatives to raise attainment in deprived areas have been Excellence in Cities (EiC), Education Action Zones (EAZ), the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) and the London Challenge (LC). These initiatives provide additional funding for schools serving deprived communities. The total costs are provided in table 1.

Table 1: Cost of programmes

£ million

	EiC	*EAZ*	*LIG*	*LC*
1989–99	—	7.6	—	—
1999–2000	26.9	22.2	—	—
2000–01	114.5	52.0	—	—
2001–02	253.0	59.0	—	—
2002–03	243.4	58.6	—	—
2003–04	278.2	53.8	175.4	16.0
2004–05	309.2	36.2	195.6	22.1
2005–06	374.5	—	202.5	22.4

Table 2 indicates the effectiveness of each programme in terms of increases in the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grade C and above. The year by year increases in schools in receipt of the various initiatives has always been above the national average trend. More formal evaluation of the initiatives is in progress, and will be published in due course.

Table 2: Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs/GNVQs at grades A-C, by initiative*

	EiC[1]	*EAZ*	*LIG*	*LC*[2]	*England*[3]
1999	36.3	29.1	—	—	45.7
2000	37.8	29.6	—	—	47.0
2001	39.8	31.1	—	—	47.9
2002	41.9	33.8	—	48.5	49.5
2003	44.4	36.3	42.1	50.7	51.1
2004	46.4	39.9	43.7	53.0	52.0
Cumulative	+10.1	+10.8	+1.6	+4.5	+6.3

[1] Schools in EiC partnerships.
[2] All London secondary schools.
[3] All maintained schools.

Faith Schools

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanisms are used to monitor *(a)* the level of contact and *(b)* the outcomes of contact between faith schools and schools which do not select on the grounds of faith; and if she will make a statement. [20621]

Jacqui Smith: Ofsted evaluates children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in school, and the effectiveness of links with other providers, as part of each school's inspection. We encourage faith schools to work with non-faith schools, and with schools of other faiths. Working with the faiths involved in running maintained schools we have published examples of good practice on www.teachernet.gov.uk/faithschools.

Geography Training

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the adequacy of training in geography given to primary school teachers. [18687]

Jacqui Smith: Earlier this year a working group of the Geography Focus Group looked at Initial Teacher Training and Continuing Professional Development in relation to geography. The focus group will report its recommendations in November. For further information on the focus group, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1266W.

Gifted Pupils

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expected cost of weekend masterclasses is for gifted pupils; and whether the teachers who will lead them will be paid an overtime wage. [20678]

Jacqui Smith: There are no plans to introduce a new national programme of weekend masterclasses for gifted pupils, though some are already available, including those brokered through the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth for its members and we encourage schools to arrange such support where that will be an effective way to cater for their gifted and talented pupils. The cost of a masterclass will vary depending on who runs it, how many learners it caters for, the nature of the activity involved and whether a charge is levied. Where appropriate, payments may be made for substantial or regular commitment to activities outside a teacher's directed time, including those taking place at weekends.

Grandparents (Caring)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is available to grandparents who permanently care for their grandchildren on the different legal arrangements under which they can apply for care. [19517]

Maria Eagle: In 2004 the Department for Education and Skills issued a Fostering Publicity Pack to local authorities. The pack included a leaflet for local authorities to use with those caring for a relative's child. This gave some information on the law and on support available to carers.

The Department for Education and Skills has not issued comprehensive guidance to grandparents on the different legal arrangements under which they may permanently care for their grandchildren. However, a summary of the legal arrangements under which family members and friends may care for a child who cannot live with their parents will be included on the Every Child Matters website before Christmas.

A number of voluntary organisations also provide advice and support to grandparents.

Key Stage Tests

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of primary school pupils

achieved level 4 and above at Key Stage 2 in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing, *(c)* mathematics and *(d)* reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2004; [17725]

(2) what percentage of primary school pupils achieved level 4 and above at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics combined in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003; [17911]

(3) what percentage of primary school pupils have achieved level 4 and above at Key Stage 2 in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing, *(c)* mathematics and *(d)* reading, writing and mathematics combined in each year since 1996. [18107]

Jacqui Smith: This information is available on the Department's website. The information on the proportion achieving level 4 in all of reading, writing and mathematics is available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000611/index.shtml. Information on the proportion achieving level 4 in reading writing and mathematics separately is available at:

For 2005—http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000595/index.shtml

For 2002–04—http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000581/index.shtml

For 1999–2001—http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000333/index.shtml

For 1996–98—http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000053/index.shtml

Korean Studies

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure that Korean studies continues to be available at universities; and if she will make a statement. [19891]

Bill Rammell: Higher education institutions are autonomous organisations responsible for their own academic direction and provision of courses in the light of student demand. Within that framework, we asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England for advice on how to secure and strengthen subjects of strategic national importance. After considering the views of the higher education sector and others with an interest, including those who have made representations on behalf of Korean studies, we will be responding formally to that advice shortly and a copy of that response will be placed in the Library.

London Skills Partnership

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the main achievements of the London Skills Partnership. [16405]

Bill Rammell: Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs), bringing together the Regional Development Agencies, the Learning and Skills Council, the Small Business Service, the Skills for Business Network, Jobcentre Plus and others, are in place in all the English regions.

The RSP for London is the London Skills Commission which brings together the main planning, funding and delivery organisations responsible for skills, employment and business support in the capital. Over the last three years, the Commission has established a regional framework for directing and influencing major spending plans and for galvanising new projects to meet the needs of London.

Government will continue to work closely with the Commission to ensure that it has the flexibility it needs to plan and deliver skills, employer and business support in a way that meets the needs of people who live and work in London.

Further details of the Commission's plans and activities for 2005–06 are included in the Commission's Prospectus and Action Plan which I have placed in the House Libraries.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her estimate is of the savings to the Exchequer of introducing a pension scheme retirement age of 65 years for all teachers and educational employees in the public sector from 2025; and if she will make a statement. [21421]

Jacqui Smith: Delaying to 2025 the introduction of a normal pension age (NPA) of 65 for members of the Teachers' Pensions Scheme would not reflect Government policy or be consistent with the principles agreed at the Public Services Forum. Those principles provide for NPA 65 to be introduced for new entrants as soon as practicable; and the pension terms of existing members to be discussed in scheme specific negotiations. The estimated net present value of the savings arising from reform of the public service schemes is expected to be around £13 billion over the next 50 years.

Savings to the Exchequer from introducing NPA 65 from 2025 have not been estimated and could be done only at disproportionate cost. It is, however, likely that delaying the introduction of NPA 65 until 2025 would absorb a substantial part of the expected £13 billion savings that will arise from the implementation of scheme reform within the framework of the principles agreed at the Public Services Forum.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the effective rate of employer contributions is to final salary pension schemes for teachers in the public sector. [21580]

Jacqui Smith: The standard contribution rate for the Teachers' Pension Scheme is currently 19.5 per cent. of salary. Of this, the employer pays 13.5 per cent. and the employee pays 6 per cent. The contribution rate is set following each valuation of the scheme. I am expecting to receive the Government Actuary's report on the current scheme valuation early in the new year.

Pupil Absences

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in reaching an agreement with travel companies on reducing the cost to families of holidays during school holiday periods to cut pupil absences in term-time; and if she will make a statement. [19657]

Jacqui Smith: The Government are joining forces with the travel industry in a new campaign to encourage parents to book holidays during school holiday periods. Launching in November the "Every Lesson Counts"

campaign will see the travel industry offer discounts and other incentives, such as free child places, to families making early bookings for the school holiday periods. Early booking holiday deals will be promoted through a dedicated "Every Lesson Counts" website which will provide a link to ABTA, Federation of Tour Operators and Visit Britain/Enjoy England sites where their members will be able to provide details of their offers for breaks—both in England and overseas—for the winter season and summer 2006.

We recognise that supply and demand can lead to price differences in periods of peak demand. This is why we have struck this innovative partnership with the travel industry to remind parents that by booking early, families will have more choice, more opportunity to book affordable holidays and more reason to keep their children in school.

Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school places will be created as a consequence of the allocations of the Targeted Capital Fund announced on 12 October 2005; and how many of these will *(a)* meet existing demand and *(b)* create additional capacity for parental choice. [19394]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* Information is not available in the form requested. Capital support for new pupil places is largely allocated to local authorities by formula through the Single Capital Pot. Allocations up to 2007–08 were announced last November, together with other formulaic allocations, relating to modernisation need and the schools access initiative, waves 2 and 3 of Building Schools for the Future, and Targeted Capital projects for 2005–06. Local authorities decide how their formulaic allocations should be joined-up and invested locally, taking account of the priorities identified in their asset management plans.

The Targeted Capital Fund, for which successful projects for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were announced on 12 October, is primarily a competitive bidding round for standards and buildings related projects. However, it does have other elements to it. One of these is a mechanism which allows authorities to apply for additional top-up funding for new pupil places where they can demonstrate that they face exceptional circumstances and that their overall resources are insufficient to meet their needs.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1072W when each school went into special measures; and whether she intends to make use of her powers under the Education Act 2005 to intervene in the running of each school. [21691]

Jacqui Smith: The date when each school went into special measures is set out in the following table. The Secretary of State considers the use of her intervention powers in the light of the circumstances of each school. A number of the schools have been subject to radical action following LA proposals approved by the Secretary of State. The schools White Paper will look at options for turning round these schools more quickly.

Schools in special measures for more than one year—October 2005

URN	School	Local authority	Phase	Date into special measures
101240	The Warren Comprehensive	Barking and Dagenham	Sec	13 May 2004
101267	Clitterhouse Junior School	Barnet	Prim	03 February 2004
101285	Hollickwood Primary School	Barnet	Prim	20 July 2004
101360	St Mary's CE High School	Barnet	Sec	22 October 2003
101365	Bishop Douglass School Finchley	Barnet	Sec	13 November 2003
106583	Sandhill Primary School	Barnsley	Prim	08 June 2004
106647	Elmhirst School, The	Barnsley	Sec	21 April 2004
109747	Oak Bank School	Bedfordshire	Spec	24 September 2004
103260	Oldknow Junior School	Birmingham	Prim	08 June 2004
103365	Highters Heath Primary [illegible]	Birmingham	Prim	16 June 2004
119754	Darwen Moorland H[illegible]ol	Blackburn	Sec	20 November 2003
133291	Boundary Commu[illegible] School	Blackpool	Prim	07 November 2002
107228	Usher Street Prim[illegible]d Nursery	Bradford	Prim	10 July 2003
107312	Windhill CE Prim[illegible]	Bradford	Prim	11 February 2004
107364	Rhodesway Schoo[illegible]	Bradford	Sec	18 December 2002
132219	Immanuel C of E [illegible] College	Bradford	Sec	21 January 2004
107363	Wyke Manor Schoo[illegible]	Bradford	Sec	10 May 2004
107468	Wedgwood School and Community Nursery	Bradford	Spec	12 October 2004
101536	St Andrew and St Francis C of E Primary School	Brent	Prim	21 April 2004
109275	Portway Community School	Bristol	Sec	14 November 2004
109276	Hengrove School	Bristol	Sec	14 November 2003
107532	Mount Pellon Junior and Infant School	Calderdale	Prim	21 April 2004
111800	St Ives Junior School	Cornwall	Prim	15 February 2003
112006	St Meriadoc C of E Junior School	Cornwall	Prim	21 April 2004
111922	Robartes Junior School	Cornwall	Prim	24 June 2004
101782	Tollgate Primary School	Croydon	Prim	14 January 2004
101746	Winterbourne Nursery and Infants' School	Croydon	Prim	30 July 2004
112241	Morton Park Primary School	Cumbria	Prim	12 November 2003
112387	Wyndham School	Cumbria	Sec	02 March 2004
112723	Moorhead Primary School	Derby	Prim	08 October 2003
112988	Merrill College	Derby	Sec	25 September 2003
132133	Derby City PRU	Derby	PRU	30 July 2004
113130	East-the-Water Community Primary School	Devon	Prim	25 September 2003
106669	Adwick Park Junior School	Doncaster	Prim	28 January 2004
106783	Northcliffe School	Doncaster	Sec	27 November 2003
113715	Portland Tophill Junior School	Dorset	Prim	30 July 2004

Schools in special measures for more than one year—October 2005

URN	School	Local authority	Phase	Date into special measures
103880	The Old Park School	Dudley	Spec	26 April 2004
117976	Flamborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	East Riding	Prim	14 January 2004
133679	Rawcliffe Pupil Referral Unit	East Riding	PRU	11 February 2004
114589	Seaford Head Community College	East Sussex	Sec	29 January 2004
115066	Holy Trinity C of E VC Primary School	Essex	Prim	19 December 2002
115036	Templars Infant and Nursery School	Essex	Prim	04 November 2003
114811	Vange Primary School and Nursery	Essex	Prim	12 November 2003
114729	Langenhoe Community Primary School	Essex	Prim	27 November 2003
115275	Ashingdon School	Essex	Prim	04 March 2004
115214	St Peter's High School and Technology College	Essex	Sec	03 October 2003
115475	Lexden Springs School	Essex	Spec	20 July 2004
115819	Sandford School	Gloucestershire	Spec	12 February 2004
100181	Bishop John Robinson CE Primary School	Greenwich	Prim	22 September 2004
100263	Holy Trinity CE Primary School	Hackney	Prim	30 September 2004
132825	Halton High School	Halton	Sec	12 July 2004
100361	Hurlingham and Chelsea Secondary School	Hammersmith and Fulham	Sec	04 March 2004
100362	Burlington Danes C of E School	Hammersmith and Fulham	Sec	25 May 2004
116449	Oak Farm Community School	Hampshire	Sec	04 March 2004
132252	Downhills Primary School	Haringey	Prim	02 December 2002
102188	Little Stanmore Nursery, First and Middle School	Harrow	Prim	22 July 2004
111599	Owton Manor Primary School	Hartlepool	Prim	21 June 2004
102347	King's Wood School	Havering	Sec	30 April 2004
116952	Weobley High School	Herefordshire	Sec	08 June 2004
117533	Collenswood School	Hertfordshire	Sec	26 November 2005
102449	Abbotsfield School for Boys	Hillingdon	Sec	07 January 2003
118264	Lawn Primary School	Kent	Prim	03 April 2000
118534	Bromstone Primary School, Broadstairs	Kent	Prim	20 November 2003
118355	Homewood Infant School	Kent	Prim	07 July 2004
118383	George Spurgen Community Primary School	Kent	Prim	12 July 2004
118260	Whitehill Junior School	Kent	Prim	22 July 2004
133663	St Mary of Charity CE (Aided) Primary School	Kent	Prim	22 July 2004
118889	Minster College	Kent	Sec	05 December 2003
133422	Endeavour High School	Kingston Upon Hull	Sec	26 March 2004
107626	Birkby Junior School	Kirklees	Prim	26 March 2003
107620	Rawthorpe Junior School	Kirklees	Prim	29 April 2004
107756	Rawthorpe High School	Kirklees	Sec	28 March 2003
133673	ETHOS Primary Pupil Referral Unit	Kirklees	PRU	10 June 2004
119710	Skerton Community High School	Lancashire	Sec	13 November 2003
108070	Intake High School Arts College	Leeds	Sec	29 April 2004
119998	Queensmead Junior School	Leicester City	Prim	12 November 2002
131945	New College Leicester	Leicester City	Sec	09 December 2003
120566	St Peter and St Paul Church of England Primary School, Burgh-Le-Marsh, The	Lincolnshire	Prim	24 June 2003
120502	Sutton Bridge Westmere Community Primary School	Lincolnshire	Prim	24 February 2004
120550	The Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School	Lincolnshire	Prim	30 July 2004
109707	Ashcroft High School	Luton	Sec	19 November 2003
109685	Putteridge High School	Luton	Sec	04 March 2004
105614	Meade Hill School	Manchester	Spec	10 March 2004
118556	Warren Wood Community Primary School and Language Unit	Medway	Prim	11 February 2004
132166	Mitcham Vale High School	Merton	Sec	02 July 2004
110532	The Radcliffe School	Milton Keynes	Sec	20 November 2003
121140	Gillingham, St Michael's C of E Voluntary Aided First School	Norfolk	Prim	11 May 2004
133432	Silverdale School	North Tyneside	Spec	06 March 2003
122074	Duston Upper School	Northamptonshire	Sec	18 September 2003
122154	The Orchard School	Northamptonshire	Spec	10 March 2004
133267	Sherwood Hall School and Sixth Form College	Nottinghamshire	Sec	21 March 2003
122848	The Gedling School	Nottinghamshire	Sec	13 November 2003
105717	East Crompton St George's C of E School	Oldham	Prim	21 April 2004
105755	Hardman Fold Community Special School	Oldham	Spec	28 April 2004
123346	Northfield School	Oxfordshire	Spec	26 April 2004
113277	Knowle Primary School	Plymouth	Prim	19 November 2003
133940	Redbridge Junior School	Redbridge	Prim	16 August 2004
102859	Hainault Forest High School	Redbridge	Sec	21 November 2003
105788	Moorhouse Primary School	Rochdale	Prim	12 February 2004
105784	Bullough Moor Primary School	Rochdale	Prim	25 February 2004
106951	Wingfield Comprehensive School	Rotherham	Sec	30 March 2004
133351	Harrop Fold School	Salford	Sec	24 June 2003
105977	Moorside High School	Salford	Sec	23 March 2004
132090	The Albion High School	Salford	Sec	20 September 2004
106011	Irwell Park High School	Salford	Spec	30 April 2003
103984	Rood End Primary School	Sandwell	Prim	02 October 2003
103978	Langley Primary School	Sandwell	Prim	05 November 2003
107014	Shirecliffe Junior School	Sheffield	Prim	08 October 2003
110077	Langleywood School	Slough	Sec	06 November 2003
123687	Middlezoy Primary School	Somerset	Prim	22 July 2004
109045	Severn Beach Primary School	South Gloucestershire	Prim	25 November 2003
115346	Thorpe Bay School	Southend	Sec	10 June 1999
115234	Prittlewell Technology College	Southend	Sec	16 June 2004
100809	Robert Browning Primary School	Southwark	Prim	27 February 2003
100788	Galleywall Primary School	Southwark	Prim	04 March 2003
100782	Cobourg Primary School	Southwark	Prim	08 June 2004

Schools in special measures for more than one year—October 2005

URN	School	Local authority	Phase	Date into special measures
104828	Newton-le-Willows Community High School	St Helens	Sec	15 January 2004
124176	Amington Heath Community School	Staffordshire	Prim	15 October 2003
124215	Springhill Primary School	Staffordshire	Prim	12 February 2004
124409	Nether Stowe High School	Staffordshire	Sec	17 February 2004
124854	Kirkley Middle (Sec) School	Suffolk	Middle	24 June 2003
125063	Watchetts Junior School	Surrey	Prim	02 December 2003
125161	Potters Gate C of E Primary School	Surrey	Prim	24 June 2004
125266	Bishop David Brown School, The	Surrey	Sec	25 November 2003
126242	Seven Fields Primary School	Swindon	Prim	26 February 2004
106235	Micklehurst All Saints C of E Primary School	Tameside	Prim	02 April 2003
106370	Stretford High School Community Language College	Trafford	Sec	22 January 2004
103040	Church Mead Junior School	Waltham Forest	Prim	01 October 2004
111433	Woolston Community High School	Warrington	Sec	12 March 2004
133572	Horizon Centre	Warrington	PRU	24 February 2004
125706	St Francis Catholic Primary School	Warwickshire	Prim	29 July 2004
125768	Queen Elizabeth School	Warwickshire	Sec	05 February 2004
125766	Martshill School	Warwickshire	Sec	21 April 2004
106548	Two Porches School	Wigan	Spec	07 June 2004
126399	Corsley CE Primary School	Wiltshire	Prim	05 July 2004
116776	Leigh and Bransford Primary School	Worcestershire	Prim	06 August 2004
116928	North Bromsgrove High School	Worcestershire	Sec	04 February 2003
131491	Redgrove School	Worcestershire	Spec	16 June 2004
130993	Kidderminster PRU	Worcestershire	PRU	29 July 2004
116958	Bromsgrove, Catshill Middle (Sec) School	Worcestershire	Middle	22 October 2003

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* knives, *(b)* guns and *(c)* other weapons were confiscated from schools in England in each of the last 10 years. [20808]

Jacqui Smith: My Department does not collect the number or nature of confiscated items taken from school pupils. The Violent Crime Reduction Bill proposes to give head teachers a power to search for weapons, and we will add to existing guidance on how police, schools and other local agencies can work together, to keep offensive weapons out of our schools.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made on implementing the recommendations of the School Meals Review Panel. [19472]

Jacqui Smith: The recommendations of the School Meals Review Panel are made in their report—Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food.

A public consultation on the Panel's recommendations to improve the nutritional standards of school meals was launched on 3 October 2005. The consultation period runs until 31 December 2005 and responses to the recommendations will be considered after this date.

The final version of the standards will begin to come into force from September 2006.

Alongside the publication of the report, the Government launched a national audit of school food provision in order to assess the progress that is already being made by local authorities and schools. The national audit, which began on 17 October, will cover issues such as how much is being spent on school meals ingredients, how they are provided, whether children get hot or cold meals and the percentage of pupils currently buying school meals.

The Government are also investing £220 million over three years to help schools and local education authorities transform school meals through training and increased hours for cooks, equipment and a minimum spend on ingredients.

Some £30 million for this year has already been allocated to local authorities—with a further £100 million over the following two years. £30 million was granted direct to schools as part of their Standards Fund allocations, with a further £60 million over the following two years.

New or upgraded school kitchen facilities, where fresh produce can be prepared and served, will be made a priority as Government rebuilds and refurbishes every secondary school through its Building Schools for the Future programme. £5.5 billion is being spent in 2005–06 rising to £6.3 billion in 2007–08 to improve school buildings. An extra £650 million capital for primary schools were announced in the last Spending Review for 2008–09 and 2009–10.

SEN

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of its total budget was spent by Lancashire local education authority on special needs education in each of the last 10 years. [21161]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is only available from 2000–01 onwards and is contained within the following table:

	Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1,2] *(£)*	*Total education revenue expenditure*[3] *(£)*	*Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with SEN as a percentage of total education revenue expenditure*
2000–01	79,766,000	511,182,000	15.6
2001–02	82,826,000	543,019,000	15.3
2002–03	86,666,000	569,835,000	15.2
2003–04	99,347,000	608,216,000	16.3
2004–05	106,320,000	641,611,000	16.6
2005–06[4]	109,113,000	702,069,000	15.5

[1] Includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad, educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and inclusion administration, assessment and co-ordination. Also included is the funding delegated to nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "notional SEN" and the individual schools budget (ISB) for special schools.

[2] The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN while the figures recorded against "notional SEN" are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN. In 2005–06, Lancashire also budgeted £13.2 million for SEN transport expenditure but this is not included in the budgeted net expenditure on SEN as figures are not available prior to 2005–06.

[3] Total education revenue expenditure is the combination of the total schools budget and the total local authority budget

[4] Section 52 Budget 2005–06 data is provisional and is subject to change by the local authority.

Note:

Cash terms figures are as reported by the LEA and are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds and may not sum due to rounding.

Teachers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary school teachers have *(a)* a first class, *(b)* an upper second, *(c)* a lower second, *(d)* a third class degree and *(e)* no degree. [20679]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides degree class information for full-time regular teachers in service in maintained secondary schools in 2003, the latest information available. For comparison, the degree class of those teachers qualifying during 2002 is also provided.

Percentage of full-time teachers in secondary school service in 2003 by class of degree held and year of qualification

	Year of qualification	
Class of degree	*All years*	*2002*
1st honours	4.1	5.7
2nd honours[1]	75.9	79.7
3rd and unclassified honours	6.0	4.0
Pass/other[2]	12.6	10.2
No degree recorded[3]	1.5	0.5
Total	100	100

[1] Information for 2nd class honours degrees cannot be split into 2:1 or 2:2 categories.

[2] Includes degrees obtained outside of the UK, teachers whose degree class is not recorded, teachers with other graduate equivalent qualifications and a small number of teachers with higher degrees where the class of their first degree is unknown.

[3] Includes teachers obtaining qualified teacher status through a Certificate of Education. Some of these teachers may have gained degree level qualifications after entering teaching but no details of these qualifications are available.

Source:

Database of Teachers Records.

TRANSPORT

A303 Improvements

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the options for improvements to the A303 past Stonehenge. [21218]

Dr. Ladyman: Options for improvements to the A303 past Stonehenge will be considered in the review of options which we announced in July. We expect to announce the terms of reference for the review shortly.

A5 Closure

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons a stretch of the A5 was closed on Sunday 18 September; on whose authority the road was closed; for what period of time it was closed; and if he will make a statement. [21682]

Dr. Ladyman: There were no incidents reported on the A5 resulting in closure but there were planned works on two sections of the A5 trunk road that weekend.

On 11 September, the Highways Agency started major reconstruction and resurfacing works on the A5 at its junction with the B4036 at Long Buckby Northampton. This involved full closure of the A5 on two successive weekends between 16 and 19 September and between 23 and 26 September. The closures operated between 21:00hrs on Friday and 06:00hrs on Monday.

There were also overnight closures on the westbound carriageway of the A5 near the Motor Institution Research Agency, in Nuneaton. On the weekend identified the closures operated between 20:00hrs and 06:00hrs on Saturday 17 September and on Sunday 18 September. The road reopened to traffic at 06:00hrs on Monday 19 September.

The A5 was closed on each occasion by means of a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order issued under the authority of the Secretary Of State for Transport. These closures were necessary to comply with the Health and Safety requirement, as the width of the carriageway is insufficient to provide adequate safety zones for the workforce while traffic is flowing.

Signed diversion routes were provided on both occasions.

Airlines (Subsidies)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* airlines and *(b)* routes in the United Kingdom receive public service obligation subsidies. [21965]

Ms Buck: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1159W.

Blue Badges

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to publish proposals on altering the criteria for eligibility for blue badges. [20158]

Ms Buck: We are working on a number of proposals to extend eligibility for blue badges (including extending the scheme to children under the age of two and people with temporary disabilities). These will require changes to regulations and we will consult on a draft regulatory package later this year.

Conferences and Seminars

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the conferences and seminars that his Department organised between 1 September 2004 and 28 July 2005, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* purpose. [19997]

Ms Buck: The Department communicates where appropriate with organisations through seminars, workshops and exhibitions and holds internal events in the course of normal management. Records of these events are not held centrally, and details for the period September 2004 to July 2005 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport over what period Crossrail was expected to make a return on its outlays at the original cost estimate; and what the current estimated period is for covering costs. [20803]

Derek Twigg: Information on the economic assessment of Crossrail is available on the Crossrail website at www.crossrail.co.uk. The costs used within the assessment are consistent with the estimate of £10.292 million (quarter 1 2002 prices) contained in the parliamentary estimate of expense submitted with the Crossrail hybrid Bill.

Cycle Lanes

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new cycle lanes have been provided using public funds in Southend since 1997. [19999]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 886-87W to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker), which provided details of the number of cycle lanes built by all local highway authorities since we started to collect these figures in 2001-02. The information for Southend is however set out in the following table for ease of reference.

Highway authority—Southend

	Number	*Kilometres*
Government office region = GO-E		
2001-02	[1]	[1]
2002-03	1	1
2003-04	1	2

[1] This indicates that no data has been supplied, while 0 indicates a figure between 0 and 0.44km for cycle lanes.

Cycling Accidents

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many injuries have been experienced by pedestrians as a result of accidents with cyclists in the last three years. [20558]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of pedestrians injured in collision with a pedal cycle is given in the table.

Number of pedestrian casualties hit by a pedal cyclist

	Pedestrian casualties
2002	209
2003	259
2004	236

Departmental Finance

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the latest estimate is of underspend by his Department *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of departmental budget for financial year 2004-05. [18306]

Ms Buck: Provisional outturn against final Departmental Expenditure Limits is set out in Tables 1 and 1A of Public Expenditure 2004-05: Provisional Outturn (Cm 6639).

Departmental NDPBs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice from. [20117]

Ms Buck: Details of the Department for Transport's advisory non-departmental public bodies can be found on the Cabinet Office's Public Bodies Directory at: http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf.

(a) The Government are required to consult the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee in respect of certain provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the DDA 2005).

(b) The Government are currently not required to publish the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee's advice. However, from 5 December 2005 the Secretary of State will be required to produce an annual report covering exemptions from the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations which must include details of the consultation carried out under sections 47(3) and 67A(1) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended), including consultation with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. In the meantime details of DPTAC's responses to consultations on exemptions are published on the Department's website.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20118]

Ms Buck: Details of the Department for Transport's advisory non-departmental public bodies can be found on the Cabinet Office's Public Bodies Directory at: http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf

(a) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee publishes some of its advice to Government, but this is not a statutory requirement. What is not published is available on request. The publication scheme setting this out is at http://www.dptac.gov.uk/foi/index.htm.

(b) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee has a statutory duty under the Transport Act 1985 to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State. The Committee also publishes this report for general circulation.

(c) The Secretary of State is required under the Transport Act 1985 to lay the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee's annual report before Parliament.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20119]

Ms Buck: Details of the Department for Transport's advisory non-departmental public bodies can be found on the Cabinet Office's Public Bodies Directory at: http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf

(a) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee has held public meetings in the past, but this is not a statutory requirement.

(b) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee has conducted public consultation exercises in the past, but this is not a statutory requirement.

(c) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee does consult stakeholders in the transport sector including organisations with commercial interests.

The Commission for Integrated Transport also consults stakeholders in the transport sector as a part of its research programme; on occasion this includes organisations with commercial interests. This is not a statutory requirement.

(d) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee has a register of Members' interests, but this is not a statutory requirement. The register of Members' interests is not published and is available from the Secretariat on request.

The Commission for Integrated Transport publishes a register of members' interests in its annual report, but this is not a statutory requirement.

(e) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee does not publish agendas for meetings.

The Commission for Integrated Transport publishes agendas for its plenary meetings, but this is not a statutory requirement.

(f) The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee publishes minutes of Main Committee meetings on its website at http://www.dptac.gov.uk/about.htm#minutes, but this is not a statutory requirement. Minutes of other meetings may in some cases be available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Commission for Integrated Transport publishes minutes of its plenary meetings, but this is not a statutory requirement.

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21025]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1802W.

Departmental Websites

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 427W, on departmental websites, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the www.transportdirect.info website; and if he will make a statement. [20819]

Dr. Ladyman: Transport Direct brings together in a single site transport data from a variety of sources including National Rail, National Express, local bus companies, local authorities, airlines and OS mapping and road data. It is the first site to do this and now draws on over 100 individual data sources in order to offer travellers effective transport choices to meet their travel needs.

Rigorous testing of the site and its data is carried out on a monthly basis. Results from September showed that 98 per cent. of journeys tested provided accurate and reliable answers. Prompt action is taken to correct any errors or omissions discovered.

Transport Direct has now delivered over 2 million user sessions. On-line feedback from users shows that 93 per cent. are satisfied and would use the site again.

EU Aviation and Emissions Trading Conference

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library *(a)* copies of all papers circulated at and *(b)* the final declaration of the conference convened by the UK presidency of the European Union on Aviation and Emissions Trading held on 26 to 27 September. [20979]

Ms Buck: The conference was an informal event aimed at bringing together Transport and Environment officials from across Europe to discuss aviation and climate change. It provided an opportunity to update people on the work done by the European Commission to date and consider the current scientific understanding of aviation's impact on climate change.

In advance of the conference delegates were sent an electronic copy of the European Commission's feasibility study on including aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. "Giving Emissions Trading Wings" by CE Delft (2005). This report is freely available from the European Commission's website at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/aviation_en.htm

As the conference was not an official UK presidency event, there was no final declaration; however, conclusions from the conference were drawn. Copies of these will be placed in the House Library alongside copies of the programme for the event and the CE Delft report.

EU Directives

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 25 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 127W, on EU discussions, if he will make a statement on measures to be introduced under the planned Directive on driving licences. [16172]

Dr. Ladyman: The proposed Directive on driving licences was discussed at the Transport Council on 27 June but no agreement was reached. However, informal indications from both the European Parliament and the member states remain generally favourable to the proposal in its entirety. It is the Government's intention to seek political agreement from Ministers at the 5 December Transport Council.

European Council Regulation 2407/92

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications were approved for a waiver under Article 8.3 of the European Council Regulation 2407/92 between 1 January 2001 and 1 May 2005; to whom they were issued; and by whom the Government have been approached for a waiver under the same scheme since 1 January. [21453]

Ms Buck: Between 1 January 2001 and 1 May 2005 the Secretary of State granted waivers under Article 8.3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2407/92 to UK airlines as set out in the following table:

UK airline	*Approvals*
Aeromega Helicopters	4
Air 2000	12
Air Atlanta Europe	16
Air Cordial	2
Air Kilroe	12
Air Wales	6
Airtours International Airways	15
Astraeus	17
Atlantic Airlines	12
Aurigny Air Services	8
BAC Express Airlines	11
BMI Regional	10
Britannia Airways	33
British Airways	47
British Airways Citiexpress Ltd.	23
British Midland	4

UK airline	Approvals
British Midland Commuter	1
British Midland Regional Ltd.	1
Cabair Helicopters Ltd.	1
Channel Express	22
CHC Scotia Limited	22
Cheqair	1
Cougar Leasing Limited	4
Eastern Airways	2
Easy Jet	19
Euroceltic Airways	6
European Aviation Air Charter	5
Excel Airways	85
First Choice Airways Ltd.	11
Flightline	5
Flybe	4
Flyglobespan	1
Gama Aviation	1
Global Supply Systems	2
Gold Air International Ltd.	1
Heavylift Cargo Airlines	4
JMC Airlines	4
Loganair	2
McAlpine Aviation Services	1
Monarch Airlines	9
My Travel Airways	42
Pool Aviation Ltd.	1
Suckling Airways Ltd.	4
Tag Aviation	4
Thomas Cook	4
Virgin Atlantic	10
Woodgate Executive Air Charter	9

Since 1 January this year the following UK airlines have applied for waivers under Article 8.3 of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2407/92:

UK Airline	Applications
Air Atlanta Europe	19
Air Wales	1
Airx Ltd. T/A Rockhopper	1
Astraeus	17
Atlantic Airlines	1
BMI Baby	2
BMI Regional	2
Britannia Airways	3
British Airways	3
British Airways Citiexpress Ltd.	6
British Midland	1
Channel Express	7
CHC Scotia Limited	12
Eastern Airways	4
Easy Jet	2
Excel Airways	52
First Choice Airways Ltd.	8
Flybe	4
Loganair	4
Monarch Airlines	2
My Travel Airways	14
Suckling Airways Ltd.	1
Thomas Cook	14
Thomsonfly	2

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in his Department in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17327]

Ms Buck: No Ministers in the Department for Transport accrue Air Miles in undertaking official travel. Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers. Guidance for Ministers on the use of Air Miles is set out in the Ministerial Code. The guidance makes clear that Air Miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity if this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Details of Air Miles accrued by officials in the Department could not be ascertained without disproportionate cost, but officials are encouraged to offset them against subsequent official travel. Where this is not possible, the benefits are foregone.

Motorways

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on plans for trial use of the hard shoulder as a running lane on the M65. [20345]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans for a trial use of the hard shoulder as a running lane on the M65. The Highways Agency are planning to trial the use of hard shoulder running as part of the M42 Active Traffic Management Pilot and this will inform any further roll out.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to widen the M25 between junctions 23 and 31; and if he will make a statement. [20102]

Dr. Ladyman: Both carriageways of the M25 between junctions 23 and 30 are to be widened as part of schemes that entered the targeted programme of improvements in April 2004. At present there are no proposals to widen junction 31.

Pedestrians (Car Accidents)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrians have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured through being hit by cars or other vehicles in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [21281]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of pedestrians killed and injured through being hit by cars or other vehicles for the years 1995 to 2004 are given in the table.

Number of pedestrian casualties killed and injured through being hit by a car or other vehicle: 1995 to 2005

	Hit by a car		Hit by another vehicle	
	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured
1995	763	39,194	275	6,851
1996	740	38,718	257	6,735
1997	752	37,780	221	6,848
1998	673	37,367	233	6,613
1999	608	35,054	262	6,964
2000	590	34,199	267	6,977

Number of pedestrian casualties killed and injured through being hit by a car or other vehicle: 1995 to 2005

	Hit by a car		Hit by another vehicle	
	Killed	Injured	Killed	Injured
2001	531	32,955	295	6,796
2002	534	31,490	241	6,519
2003	533	29,276	241	6,355
2004	462	28,116	209	6,094

Public Transport Schemes (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total Government spending on public transport schemes in Lancashire has been in each year since 1997. [21162]

Ms Buck: Much of the Government spending related to rail cannot be readily disaggregated to local authority level.

The funding provided directly to Lancashire county council since 1997 that can be used for spending on public transport schemes is shown in the following table.

£ million

	Lancashire county council nature of funding	
	Integrated transport block	Targeted bus grants[1]
1998–99	2.203	1.233
1999–2000	3.833	1.139
2000–01	4.200	1.411
2001–02	11.200	2.212
2002–03	11.922	1.575
2003–04	12.051	3.777
2004–05	13.033	1.238
2005–06	11.000	1.29

[1] Includes rural bus subsidy grant and rural bus challenge funding.

The integrated transport block funding can be used for local highways or public transport capital projects. It has been for Lancashire to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities. On average councils spend about one third of this block on public transport schemes.

Railways

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress on the new franchise for Thameslink services. [20578]

Derek Twigg: Bids are currently being evaluated by the Department for Transport. It is intended to announce the successful bidder before the end of the year.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the new West Midlands franchise on rail services between Leighton Buzzard and London Euston, with particular reference to the *(a)* speed and *(b)* frequency of services; and if he will make a statement. [20904]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The announcement by the Secretary of State on Tuesday 18 October determined the new franchise map, including the creation of a new West Midlands franchise.

The specification for the franchise, including services from Leighton Buzzard, will be reviewed at the next stage of the process.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what performance measures his Department has in place to monitor the *(a)* quality and *(b)* reliability of service provided by the company awarded the East Coast Mainline Franchise. [21573]

Derek Twigg: GNER's Franchise Agreement contains a number of measures whereby the Department for Transport is able to monitor both the qualitative and quantitative delivery of services. GNER's obligations include targets for the number of minutes delay caused to passengers as well as the number of services cancelled. GNER also has a punctuality target for 90 per cent. of services to arrive within 10 minutes by 1 January 2010. The quality of GNER's service is measured predominantly through a Service Quality regime, whereby its stations, trains and depots are periodically surveyed to ensure that standards are being maintained. The quality of its delivery is also reviewed and benchmarked twice a year as part of the industry-wide National Passenger Survey.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the level of Government subsidy for the railway industry will be in the 2006–07 financial year; [20566]

(2) what plans the Government have for future subsidy of the railway industry; [20567]

(3) what changes there have been in levels of net Government subsidy to the railway industry since 1997. [20568]

Derek Twigg: The Government's spending plan for rail were originally set out in Transport 10 Year Plan document published in July 2000. These spending plans were updated in Department for Transport Progress Report published December 2002.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's statement to the House of 10 February 2005 also sets out how the Department for Transport intends to allocate money on railways until April 2009.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations his Department has received on the proposed Railfreight terminal at Radlett Aerodrome; and if he will make a statement. [21798]

Derek Twigg: My Department is not aware of any formal representations about this proposal. A number of informal discussions were held with the Strategic Rail Authority before the freight functions were transferred to the Department in June this year.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Strategic Rail Authority regarding the future of train services in *(a)* Sole Street, *(b)* Gravesend, *(c)* Higham and *(d)* Meopham. [19827]

Derek Twigg: The future train services at Sole Street, Gravesend, Higham and Meopham were developed, through consultation with stakeholders, by the Strategic Rail Authority in specifying the new Integrated Kent Franchise. These proposed train services for the new

franchise were approved by the Secretary of State for Transport before being included in the Invitation to Tender.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who is responsible for the pension deficit on South West Trains; what would happen to the pension liabilities in the event that a new franchisee was chosen; and if he will make a statement. [19985]

Derek Twigg: Most employees of South West Trains are members of the South West Trains Shared Cost Section of the Railways Pension Scheme. South West Trains, as franchise holder, is responsible for managing the terms and conditions of service of its staff, including pension arrangements, in accordance with general Employment Legislation and the specific legislation relating to Railway pensions.

In the event of a shortfall in this Section, the rules of the Scheme allow the employer and trustee six months after the valuation is signed to agree arrangements to make good the shortfall. The valuation as at 31 December 2004 is expected to be finalised by 31 December 2005 and so the six months will expire on 30 June 2006. If no agreement is reached within the six months there are default provisions in the rules that basically would increase both the members and employer's contributions.

On a change of franchisee, it is expected that the new franchisee will become the Designated Employer for the Section and assume all employer contributions for the Section.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers use *(a)* Westcliff-on-Sea and *(b)* Leigh-on-Sea stations at (i) morning peak, (ii) evening peak and (iii) off-peak hours. [19995]

Derek Twigg: Latest figures available from the Train Operator (2002–03 survey), show the following results:

Westcliff-on-Sea station is used by approximately 700 people in each weekday peak. Off-peak travel from this station is also used by approximately 700 passengers, although spread over a larger time period.

Leigh-on-Sea station is used by approximately 1,850 people in each peak, with a further 600 passengers using the station outside these times.

"Peak" is defined as 0700–1000 and 1600–1900 weekdays, excluding public and bank holidays.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about train timetabling on the Hastings to London Victoria route. [20949]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Representations have been received from local organisations, Members of Parliament, local councils and members of the public. Proposals for future train services on the Hastings to London Victoria route have been developed by the Strategic Rail Authority, through consultation with stakeholders, in developing the Brighton Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS). A final strategy will be published in due course.

Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on rebranding in his Department and related agencies in each of the last five years. [18327]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in 2002 following machinery of government changes.

The expenditure listed relates to the one-off costs of rebranding of the new Department and of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) which was formed in 2003; a brand and design guide used in the Highways Agency and minor changes to signage and electronic templates at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

	£
2001–02	nil
2002–03	
central Department	25,000
Highways Agency	48,000
VOSA	3,700
2003–04	
VOSA	20,000
2004–05	
DVLA	5,000
2005–06	nil to date

Regional Transport Schemes

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to ensure the prioritisation of regional transport schemes by committees of regional assemblies are *(a)* publicised and *(b)* discussed further with stakeholders. [20585]

Ms Buck: On 21 July we issued guidance to the eight English regions outside London on preparing advice to central Government on the prioritisation of housing, economic development and transport schemes in their region. They were asked to submit advice by 31 January 2006.

The guidance made clear that while regional development agencies and regional assemblies would have a key role to play in preparing advice, other regional, sub-regional and local bodies, including the business community and local government, should also be brought into the process to ensure that the advice reflects relevant interests across each region. It also stressed that advice will be more credible to Ministers if it is a product of a wide consensus within regions.

Road Safety

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has had from the emergency services since June 2001 on the removal of *(a)* speed humps and *(b)* pinch points on the road network. [20559]

Ms Buck: The Department has not received any representations from the emergency services since June 2001 on the removal of traffic calming measures.

However, the London Ambulance Service did contact the Department in October 2001 with concerns that traffic calming may have a detrimental effect on ambulance response times. A regular dialogue has been maintained since this time to establish the nature of the concerns and to assist with possible solutions.

If any emergency service were experiencing difficulties with particular traffic calming measures, we would expect them to raise this with the relevant local highway authority rather than the Department. Local highway authorities have responsibility for the design and implementation of traffic calming measures, and any subsequent alterations they might require.

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the reasons that (i) men and (ii) women commit offences under sections (A) 14(3), (B) 15(2) and (C) 15(4) of the Road Traffic Act 1988; and if he will make a statement. [19993]

Dr. Ladyman: These offences relate to the failure of adults to use seat belts in motor vehicles and to driver responsibility for the use of seat belts by children less than 14 years of age in the front or rear of motor vehicles.

The Department commissioned TRL Report 222, "The characteristics and attitudes of adult non-wearers of rear restraints", which was published in 1998. That provided information on attitudes towards rear seat belt use by men and women. This has been used to inform the Department's publicity campaign. The report is available to purchase from TRL via their website at http://www.trl.co.uk/store/report_detail.asp?srid=2395.

TRL also publish reports of twice-yearly observational surveys for the Department of seat belt wearing by adults and children. A summary of the results of these surveys from 1982 is available at http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/statistics/belt0504.htm. The latest report LF2096 is available free at http://www.trl.co.uk/store/report_list.asp?pid=211&pno=5&searchtext. That contains the references to earlier reports in the series. These reports provide information by gender and age.

The Department undertook research in March 2002, aimed at identifying the most compelling message that will encourage seat belt wearing. This has enabled the Department to target its messages on seat belt wearing.

Speed Cameras

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of administering the speed camera network was in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by main area of expenditure. [21067]

Dr. Ladyman: Safety Camera Partnership expenditure in 2003–04 was £91,877,359 of which £62,389,618 was revenue expenditure and £29,487,741 was capital expenditure. All partnership audit certificates for 2003–04, which show a breakdown of expenditure by partner, are posted on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_foi/documents/divisionhomepage/035233.hcsp

Audit certificates for 2004–05 will be published later this year.

Thames Port Development

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make a final decision on the proposed new Thames port. [21604]

Dr. Ladyman: On 20 July, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport announced that he was minded to approve the application for a Harbour Empowerment Order for the proposed London Gateway port on the former Shell Haven oil refinery site. On the same day my right hon. Friend the First Secretary of State announced that he was minded to grant outline planning permission for a commercial and logistics centre on land adjacent to the proposed new port.

These decisions were subject to resolution of a number of issues, including of the impacts of both of these proposed developments on the highways network. Proposals to deal with these matters were received on 20 October and will be carefully considered before proceeding to a final decision.

Travel Concessions

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will estimate the annual cost of extending a national half-fare travel concession to young people aged *(a)* 14 to 16, *(b)* 14 to 18 and *(c)* 14 to 21 years; [19932]

(2) how much funding the Government have provided to local authorities to help fund travel concessions for young people aged between 16 and 19 years in full-time education in each year since 1997; [19933]

(3) what the estimated *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost to central Government of extending concessionary fare schemes for local public transport to (i) those over 60 and the disabled in England and (ii) young people up to age 19 in full-time education in England has been in each year since 1997. [19934]

Ms Buck: In 2001 the Government introduced a statutory minimum entitlement for off-peak local bus travel for pensioners and disabled people in England and provided £54 million to fund the extra costs. A further £50 million was provided in 2003–04 to fund the entitlement for men aged 60–64. The Government will provide an extra £350 million in 2006–07 to fund the cost to local authorities of the improvement in the statutory minimum entitlement from half to free-fares. Local authorities, and Passenger Transport Executives, have the freedom to offer enhancements to the statutory minimum, the costs of which are included in the figures presented in the table.

There is no statutory requirement on local authorities to provide concessionary fares for young people up to age 19 in full-time education in England, therefore no specific funding. Local authorities can offer such concessions at their own discretion based on local needs and financial priorities. The costs of providing discretionary concessionary travel schemes for the young are shown below.

£ million

	Concessionary fare reimbursement for travel by the elderly	Concessionary fare reimbursement for travel by the young
1997–98	303.1	51.9
1998–99	308.8	47.3
1999–2000	324.1	45.8
2000–01	331.6	51.3
2001–02	351.4	50.2
2002–03	360.1	51.7
2003–04	369.0	51.0
2004–05	Not yet available.	

It is not possible to breakdown the concessionary fare reimbursement figures by different age groups.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what arrangements are planned under the new pension arrangements to maintain civil servants' pension rights (including qualifying dates) in the event of service being broken on account of *(a)* illness, *(b)* family responsibilities, *(c)* unpaid leave and *(d)* other causes. [20966]

Mr. Hutton: The Government and trade unions agreed a common set of principles for public service pension reform at a special meeting of the Public Services Forum on 18 October 2005. Discussions on changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme for existing and new employees will now take place between the Cabinet Office and the civil service unions in accordance with the common set of agreed principles. No decisions have therefore yet been made on the detail relating to any new pension arrangements.

The Cabinet Office plans to publish a follow-up document summarising the proposed way forward following the conclusion of discussions with the civil service unions.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what representations he has received on proposed changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme. [17363]

Mr. Hutton: The consultation document "Building a sustainable future" set out the Cabinet Office's proposals to reform the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The consultation finished on 4 March 2005. Cabinet Office has received over 6,200 responses to the consultation. This included some 6,000 responses from scheme members (139 of which were sent via their local Member of Parliament), 45 responses from civil service employers and pension administrators, and 138 responses from 11 unions and their sub-branches.

Since then the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has chaired three special meetings of the Public Services Forum (PSF) to discuss public sector pension reform. At the third and final meeting, which took place on the 18 October 2005, the Government and trade unions agreed a common set of principles for public service pension reform. Discussion on changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme for existing and new employees will now take place between the Cabinet Office and the civil service unions in accordance with the common set of agreed principles.

The Cabinet Office plans to publish a follow-up document summarising the consultation responses, and the proposed way forward, following the conclusion of discussions with the civil service unions.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21118]

Mr. Hutton: The Cabinet Office Performance Management System supports the further development of skills and competences and if basic skills needs for individuals become apparent these would be addressed through personal development plans.

The Cabinet Office, in response to an identified need for a significant group of employees, has run a series of communication skills events with a specific focus on clear business English and the effective use of language and punctuation.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the literacy and numeracy skills of new Civil Service staff recruited through the Fast Stream Accelerated Development programme. [21189]

Mr. Hutton: Successful candidates for the Civil Service Fast Stream will have demonstrated a high level of literacy and numeracy skills during the selection process. They are required to pass challenging selection tests which measure both their numerical and verbal reasoning skills. At the subsequent Fast Stream Assessment Centre, candidates are assessed through written and oral exercises which require both excellent written communication skills and numerical ability.

E-Government

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of public sector spending on information and communications technology for e-Government in each year since 2001, broken down by Government department; and what estimate he has made of the effects of e-Government on cost efficiency of departments. [16928]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office does not collect information on individual departments' spending on e-Government. However recent research by Kable indicates that £14 billion per annum is spent on information technology (IT) across the public sector.

The Spending Review 2004 (SR04) reported that significant investment in information communication technology (ICT) in both central and local government is streamlining the delivery of services to the public, cutting transaction costs and reducing paperwork. Examples of efficiency gains can be found in the Spending Review, copies of which are available in the Library and at http://hm-Treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/report/spend_sr04_repindex.cfm

Strategy on Adult Basic Skills

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the implementation of the Strategy on Adult Basic Skills for the Civil Service. [21188]

Mr. Hutton: Since the civil service strategy was launched in 2001, all main government departments, as well as many small departments, agencies and non departmental public bodies (NDPBs), have developed action plans for implementation of the strategy. Departments have made significant progress against these action plans, including: embedding skills for life training in in-house courses; developing specific literacy and numeracy courses and working with unions, through union learning representatives, to support staff. The Ministry of Defence Civil Service in Northern Ireland has recently won a national training award for their skills for life activity.

The Cabinet Office, in its corporate work, has continued to work closely with Department for Education and Science (DfES) to support departments in implementation of the strategy. In addition, Cabinet Office as employer has addressed the strategy and taken action including providing information on an internal website; providing advice and support to staff; and the distribution of marketing materials and literature to raise awareness.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU Finance

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* Departments are involved in discussions on the European Union's next financial perspective and the future of the UK's abatement; and if he will make a statement. [21191]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The issue of the UK's position on the financial perspectives is a matter for the Government as a whole, and not for individual Ministers or Departments. A large number of Departments have an interest in the issues mentioned.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the negotiations concerning *(a)* the European Union's next financial perspective, *(b)* the future of the UK's abatement and *(c)* the reform of the common agricultural policy. [21192]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will update Parliament on these negotiations in due course.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals the Government are putting forward to EU *(a)* partners and EU *(b)* institutions with regard to the European Union's next financial perspective; and if he will make a statement. [21194]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government have not put forward any Presidency proposals for the 2007–13 budget. We have held formal consultations with each of the 24 other member states, as well as the two accession states Romania and Bulgaria, in order to ensure that we understand their views and concerns on this issue. The UK Presidency believes agreement on the 2007–13 budget can and should be reached in December, and we will have to reflect, in the light of member states' views and the proposals published by the European Commission on 20 October, how best to do this. We plan to have a first ministerial discussion of the issue at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 7 November, followed by further discussions through November leading to the European Council on 15–16 December. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will update Parliament on these negotiations in due course.

United States

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the purpose of his forthcoming visit to the United States. [19971]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The purpose of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's visit to the United States was to have extended working discussions with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on the full range of issues facing the UK and US; to promote the UK agenda to a southern US audience; and to visit a historically troubled area that has turned itself around. He spent Friday 21 October and the weekend in Alabama and at either end of the visit stopped off in Washington.

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the itinerary is for his forthcoming visit to the United States. [20204]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spent Friday 21 October and the weekend in Alabama at the invitation of the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, visiting a historically troubled area that has turned itself around. The programme provided them with the opportunity to have extended working discussions on the full range of issues facing the UK and US, as well as to promote the UK agenda to a southern US audience. At either end of the visit the Foreign Secretary stopped off in Washington.

The Foreign Secretary gave a foreign policy speech at the Blackburn Institute, and met victims of Hurricane Katrina at a relief camp set up in Alabama, as well as those who helped in the hurricane relief effort. He also visited a Civil Rights institute, attended a dedication event for the victims of a bombing at a local Baptist Church, attended a local football game and toured an elementary school and a medical institute.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the potential economic benefits to the North East arising from London hosting the 2012 Olympics. [21658]

Mr. Caborn: St. James' Park, Newcastle, will host preliminary rounds of the football competition in 2012.

We expect the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to deliver wide economic benefits for the UK, although no specific assessment has been made of the benefits to the North East.

The Games will offer companies the opportunity to compete for billions of pounds worth of contracts, provide the opportunity to bid for preparation camps and provide a welcome boost to the tourism industry. One North East will continue to work closely with my Department and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games to ensure they are well placed to benefit fully from these opportunities.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that businesses situated in all parts of the United Kingdom are able to tender for contracts to supply goods and services in respect of the London Olympics 2012. [21195]

Mr. Caborn: All kinds of businesses, large and small, will be needed to deliver the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Tendering opportunities will be publicised by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) when it is established, and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Until then, the London Development Agency (LDA) and Transport for London (TfL) will invite tenders for all contracts in relation to the construction or transport requirements of the Olympic Park via the *Official Journal of the European Union* (OJEU). These opportunities will be open to businesses across the whole of the UK.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of her Department. [21109]

Mr. Lammy: If a DCMS employee or their line manager identifies that they may have a literacy or numeracy skills gap, the DCMS Learning and Development team can provide advice and support. If appropriate, the Department can arrange for the employee to be screened to identify the nature and extent of their learning needs. If a literacy or numeracy need is identified, the Department will then arrange and fund appropriate training and sitting of national tests.

This information is published within the Department as part of the Learning and Development Policy and is available to all DCMS staff on the Department's intranet site.

National Lottery Bill

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received from charities regarding the National Lottery Bill; and if she will make a statement. [21478]

Mr. Caborn: I have not received any representations from charities about the National Lottery Bill. However my officials have had regular discussions on a variety of topics including Bill provisions with umbrella bodies such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. In addition I met senior representatives of the voluntary and community sector on 14 July to discuss their views on the Bill.

National Sports Foundation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what meetings she has had on the establishment of the National Sports Foundation; and if she will make a statement. [21481]

Mr. Caborn: The Government, along with Sport England and the national governing bodies for Football, Cricket, Tennis, Rugby Union and Rugby League, are continuing to discuss and examine options on how most effectively to deliver the National Sports Foundation. A further announcement will be made in due course.

Stonehenge

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effects on the construction of the Stonehenge Visitors Centre on the delay of constructing the A303 improvements. [20894]

Mr. Lammy: The dependencies between the improvements to the A303 and the proposed Stonehenge Visitors' Centre will be taken into account in the review of options for the road scheme. The review is essential given the escalating costs of the published road improvement scheme since the Planning Inquiry last year. We plan to announce the terms of reference and arrangements for the review later this autumn.

Tourism

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to promote tourism in England. [20374]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* My Department works actively to promote both domestic and inbound tourism in England. At a national level, marketing and other work to promote tourism in England is overseen by the England Marketing Advisory Board, which advises on the use of grant in aid funding from my Department to VisitBritain for that purpose. Such funding will total £12.9 million this year, and is included in VisitBritain's total allocation of £49.05 million.

I have informed VisitBritain, and the Advisory Board, that my priority for tourism in England is EnglandNet, which will shortly be fully operational as a single marketing and information platform for internet users. The EnglandNet system allows users in the UK and overseas to access destination information at national, regional and local levels, and acts as a portal to the booking facilities offered by approved commercial operators. It has the full support of the Regional Development Agencies.

With the involvement of the Advisory Board, VisitBritain runs a number of high profile, England-specific marketing campaigns each year. Recent campaigns have included Waterside England and Outdoor England. These campaigns are taken forward within Great Britain to promote visits to England and, following VisitBritain's recent re-organisation of its overseas activities, in the Irish, French, German, and Dutch markets.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Contracts

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost to his Department of the leasing or hiring helicopters and fixed wing aircraft from commercial contractors has been in the 2005-06 financial year; from which companies these aircraft are sourced; how many have been sourced in this financial year; whether the contracts include flight crew and aircraft maintenance costs; where these aircraft are based; and what duties they perform. [18424]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 October 2005]*: The cost to the Ministry of Defence of leasing or hiring helicopters and fixed wing aircraft is likely to be in the region of £74 million in 2005-06. The information requested is shown in the following table.

The data shown in this table has been gathered from centrally held records. A number of areas within the Department hire or lease aircraft but details of these contracts are not held centrally and could be supplied only at disproportionate costs.

Table showing aircraft involved, status of flight crew and maintenance costs, sites and duties

Company supplying service	*Aircraft Type and Number and contracted hours*	*Aircrew / Maintenance Status*	*Location*	*Description of Task*	*Notes*
FB Heliservices Ltd., Grove House, Lutyens Close, Chineham Court, Basingstoke, RG24 8AG	3 x Bell 212HP AH Mk1 1200 flying hours per year	Military Aircrew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	Belize	Helicopter support to the British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB)—Provision of Forward AeroMedical Evacuation (FAME) in support of jungle training in Belize. Additional tasks include movement of internal and external freight, personnel movement, winching and abseiling operations.	
FB Heliservices Ltd.	3 x Bell 212HP AH Mk1 1200 flying hours per year	Military Aircrew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	Brunei	Helicopter Support to the Brunei Garrison—Provision of Forward AeroMedical Evacuation (FAME) in support of jungle training in Brunei. Additional tasks include movement of internal and external freight, personnel movement, winching and abseiling operations.	
FB Heliservices Ltd.	L x Bell 212HP AH Mk1 Tasked as required. Minimum 225 flying hours per year.	Military students, Civil Instructors provided under the contract Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	Middle Wallop	Provision of Pilot Training in support of 25 FLT AAC Belize and 7 FLT AAC Brunei.	Costs also include the provision of 50 simulator hours in the USA annually. Aircraft is provided at minimal profit to company who are able to use it for third party revenue.
FB Heliservices Ltd.	4 x Bell 412EP (Griffin HAR Mk2) 1600 flying hours per year	Military Aircrew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	Cyprus	Helicopter Support to British Forces Cyprus (BFC) and the Sovereign Base Areas Administration (SBAA)—The aircraft provide Search and Rescue cover primarily for Fast Jet flying. Additional tasks include movement of internal and external freight, personnel movement, winching operations, water drop for firefighting	
Contract with FBS Grove House, Lutyens Close, Chineham Court, Basingstoke, RG24 8AG	37 x Eurocopter AS350BB Single Squirrel 11 x Bell 412EP (Griffin HT Mk1) 9 x Griffins per day (7615 hrs/year) and 32 x Squirrels per day (28690 hrs/year)	The contract includes a number of support services, flight simulators and the provision of some flying instructors. Military students, military/civil instructors	Shawbury, Valley and Middle Wallop	Single/Multi-Engine Basic/ Advanced Rotary Wing flying training	
British International, Penzance Heliport.	2 x Eurocopter AS365N2 Dauphin 1500 flying hours per year	Civil Aircrew provided under the contract Maintenance costs, scheduled and	Plymouth City Airport	Used to convey sea riding staff and equipment to and from warships primarily involved in Flag Officer Sea Training exercises	Cost also includes provision of further 200 flying hours capability on up to 2

Table showing aircraft involved, status of flight crew and maintenance costs, sites and duties

Company supplying service	*Aircraft Type and Number and contracted hours*	*Aircrew / Maintenance Status*	*Location*	*Description of Task*	*Notes*
		unscheduled, are included in the lease price		on the south coast. Also used for ships aviation training, equipment calibrations and Flight Deck Training Unit activities at RNAS Culdrose. There is provision in the contract for miscellaneous airborne trials and other support tasks as well as the provision of assistance to casualty evacuation.	civil registered S-61 helicopters based at Penzance Heliport. Used in support of Joint Maritime Courses in waters around Scotland and embarkations throughout the UK.
PremiAir Ltd. Hangar Lane, Denham Aerodrome, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB9 5DF	3 x Eurocopter AS355F1 Twin Squirrels 900hrs flying hours per year	Military Aircrew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	Northolt	Military Communications	
F.R. Aviation Bournemouth Int. Airport, Christchurch, Dorset BN23 6NE	12 x Falcon DA-20	Civil Aircrew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the lease price	RN/ RAF Partnering Arrangement	Medium speed Electronic Warfare, Threat Simulation, Silent Target and Target Towing Service for both RN and RAF. 6 x Falcon DA-20 based at Bournemouth International Airport. 6 x Falcon DA-20 based at Durham Tees Valley Airport. Used to provide a variety of training for ships and aircraft both in the UK and internationally, in support of national and NATO training exercises.	
SERCO Defence Aerospace, Enterprise House, 11 Bartley Wood Business Park, Bartley Way, Hook, Hants RG27 9XB	Raytheon Beech King Air 200 to meet requirement of 6281 flying hours per year	Military crew Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the contract price	Cranwell	Station Support Services and aircraft for Flying Training	
VT Aerospace, Bournemouth Int. Airport, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6BF	94 Grob Tutor	Mil Trainers Maintenance costs, scheduled and unscheduled, are included in the contract price	Wyton, Colerne, Glasgow, Benson, Boscombe, Church Fenton, Cosford, Cranwell, Leeming, Leuchars, St. Athan, Woodvale	Aircraft to facilitate Elementary flying training for the RAF, Air Experience flying for cadets, flying for University Air Squadrons plus some flying for direct entrant officers.	
Babcock, Pembroke House, Pegasus Business Park, Herald Way, Castle Donnington, Derby DE74 2TZ	24 Firefly	Mix of contractor and mil instructors. Contractor responsible for all support & maintenance costs	Barkston Heath, Cranwell, Middle Wallop	Elementary flying training for Army and Royal Navy. Ongoing training programme for RAF concentrating on crew cooperation, crew resource management and airways flying of multi engine pilots.	

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of Annex H to the RAF Board of Inquiry report into the loss of Tornado GR1A at Killin (Glen Ogle) on 1 September 1994. [20791]

Mr. Touhig: I will place a copy of Annex H of the Board of Inquiry into the loss of the Tornado ZG708 at Killin (Glen Ogle) on 1 September 1994 in the Library. The document has been declassified and a small amount of information at paragraph 3 and Annexes A and B, has been withheld under the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), enabled by the Human Rights Act 1998. The names of individuals that do not form a substantive part of the information requested have been removed.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the RAF Boards of Inquiry reports on *(a)* the Tornado ZE858 which crashed at Stainmore, Cumberland on 21 October 1993, *(b)* the Tornado F3 which crashed into the North sea 45 nautical miles north east of Scarborough on 7 June 1994, *(c)* the Tornado GR1 which crashed 16 nautical miles north of RAF Lossiemouth on 19 July 1994 and *(d)* the Tornado F3 which crashed on 10 March 1995. [20792]

Mr. Touhig: The Boards of Inquiry reports are being recalled from archives and will be examined for release, suitably redacted. I will write to the right hon. Member, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Arms Fairs

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department issues guidelines to companies on the types of weapons made available for sale at arms fairs. [17191]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

No. However we do liaise with exhibition organisers about export control obligations which may apply to them, or to exhibitors and their clients.

In preparation for DSEi 2005, for example, the DTI's Export Control Organisation (ECO) liaised with the exhibition organisers, providing them with guidance on exhibition activities, which was published on the exhibition organisers' website and in a handbook provided to the exhibitors. A bulletin was also sent to all exhibitors prior to the exhibition, which included information about relevant UK controls, including the UK's trade controls. Exhibitors were made further aware of UK export/trade control requirements in a pre-briefing for exhibitors immediately prior to the exhibition.

Army Prosecuting Authority

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many investigations of alleged ill-treatment by service personnel in Iraq have been discontinued at a commanding officer's request before the Army Prosecuting Authority has had an opportunity to consider them. [21099]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Balkans

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in the Balkans. [20717]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 657W, to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham (Mr. Hands).

Civilian Staff

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civilian staff employed by the Department have been made redundant in each year since 1998. [20449]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The following table gives details of Ministry of Defence civilian redundancies, both voluntary and compulsory, for the financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05. Comparable information for financial year 1998–99 is not available.

Civilian staff redundancy : financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	Headcount
1999–2000	1,560
2000–01	1,220
2001–02	840
2002–03	710
2003–04	1,580
2004–05	890

Notes:
1. This table uses the revised definition of civilian personnel (www.dasa.mod.uk) includes trading funds.
2. No redundancy information is available for Royal Fleet Auxiliary or locally engaged civilian staff.
3. Due to the founding methods used, figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17992]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Earthquake Rescue Work

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what requests *(a)* the UK Government and *(b)* NATO have received from the (i) Pakistani, (ii) Kashmiri and (iii) Indian authorities for helicopters and other military equipment deployed in Afghanistan to be redeployed to humanitarian emergency rescue work following the earthquake. [18270]

Mr. Ingram: The Pakistan Government asked the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 9 October for United Kingdom helicopter support in the expectation that there were UK military helicopters in the region. At the time, there were no deployments of UK military helicopters in the region, including in Afghanistan. At DfID's request, however, the Ministry of Defence will deploy three heavy lift CH-47 Chinook helicopters, with accompanying personnel, for a four week operating period to support the Pakistan relief effort. A small military team travelled to Islamabad on 19 October to facilitate the deployment of these aircraft.

The MOD also air-lifted two Puma helicopters from Seville, Spain, by RAF C-17 for use by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in support of the relief effort. The helicopters arrived in Islamabad on 17 October.

The requests that NATO has received are available on the NATO website.

Fraud Investigations

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Special Investigations Branch personnel and *(b)* secondees from other agencies were assigned to the investigation of fraud in (i) 2003–04, (ii) 2004–05 and (iii) to date in 2005–06. [21535]

Mr. Ingram: Since 2003, the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch has employed two Staff Sergeants and four specialist Financial Warrant Officers to investigate fraud, related both to Public and Non-Public funds in the Army.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he was first informed of Special Investigations Branch (SIB) inquiries into fraud in the Adjutant General's Office; what estimate he has made of the amount of money fraudulently dispensed; how many employees are under investigation; and at what rank the SIB officer in charge of the investigation is. [21534]

Mr. Ingram: I am unable to comment as this could prejudice ongoing Royal Military Police investigations.

Infantry

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the adequacy and availability of British infantry to respond to additional urgent deployments; and if he will make a statement. [20676]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on the 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 12, to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess).

Iran

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to ensure the repatriation of Royal Naval equipment seized by Iranian forces in the Shatt-Al-Arab. [21205]

Mr. Ingram: We have pressed the Iranian authorities on many occasions to return the Royal Navy boats and equipment which they have held since June 2004. Our discussions continue.

Iraq

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many hired cars and vans are in use with UK forces in Iraq; and what the cost was of the hire of such vehicles in Iraq in 2004–05. [21077]

Mr. Ingram: As at 25 October 2005 there are a total of 117 cars and vans on hire in Iraq. Numbers of cars and vans on hire have decreased from 529 in April to the current levels. The cost of the hire of such vehicles for the whole of 2004–05 was £8,274,176.82.

Land Mines

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with the US Administration on the use of antipersonnel landmine production. [20252]

Mr. Ingram: None. This is a matter for the US Administration.

Manning Levels

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on manning levels in *(a)* the Army and *(b)* the Royal Navy. [20674]

Mr. Ingram: A comprehensive analysis of manning levels in the UK armed forces is given in Tri Service Publication (TSP) 4: UK Armed Forces Quarterly Press Release. This publication contains a wide range of information including strength data and intake to and outflow from the UK regular forces. The most recent version of TSP 4 showing the position as at 1 July 2005 was published on 25 August 2005.

For more recent summary information on strength and requirement I refer the hon. Member to the 1 September issue of TSP 3: UK Armed Forces Strengths and Requirements, published on 13 October 2005.

Copies of both publications are available in the Library of the House.

Transport Aircraft

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the operational status is of the Royal Air Force's VC10 fleet; and if he will make a statement. [21711]

Mr. Ingram: The VC10 fleet is currently meeting all its operational and training tasks, comprising the air-to-air refuelling and air transport roles.

WALES

Council Tax Revaluation

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total amount of additional tax revenue collected by his Department was following the council tax revaluation process in Wales. [17279]

Nick Ainger: This Department does not collect council tax. Council tax is collected by local authorities to fund services they provide to their communities. There is no direct relationship between the revaluation and the overall amount of tax revenue. That is determined by the budgets set by local authorities in the context of grants made available by the Assembly Government. There was a 9.5 per cent. increase in tax revenue in 2005–06 because of the budget decisions of local authorities. This is in line with the increase in tax revenue in previous years.

Health Services

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will define his responsibilities with regard to health services within Wales. [21388]

Mr. Hain: The role of the Secretary of State is to act as the voice of Wales in the Cabinet and in Parliament. My responsibilities include ensuring that the interests of Wales are fully considered when Government policy is developed at Westminster and working with the devolved Administration in Cardiff. I am also responsible for the passage of Welsh legislation through Parliament, and act as a champion and public voice for Wales. As Secretary of State for Wales I regularly discuss health issues with colleagues within Government and the Assembly, and with Members of Parliament representing Welsh constituencies.

HEALTH

IVF Treatment (Hampshire)

15. **Mrs. Maria Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure IVF treatment is available in North Hampshire in line with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines. [20920]

Caroline Flint: It is for the North Hampshire Primary Care Trust to implement, in North Hampshire, the clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems produced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Primary care trusts do so in liaison with patients' groups and local health bodies, taking account of local healthcare priorities .

Haemophilia

16. **Michael Connarty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the provision of recombinant clotting products for people with haemophilia. [20921]

Caroline Flint: The final phase of the roll out of recombinant clotting products for all haemophiliac patients commenced on 1 April 2005 and will be completed by 31 March 2006.

NHS Beds

17. **Mr. Hands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds there were in the NHS in England in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2004–05. [20922]

Mr. Byrne: In 1997–98 there were 138,047 general and acute hospital beds in the national health service in England, of which 107,807 were acute beds. In 2004–05 there were 136,133 G and A beds, of which 109,505 were acute beds.

The NHS plan target of increasing the number of G and A beds by 2,100 from the 1999–2000 baseline was met in 2003–04.

Emergency Care

19. **Chris Mole:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to improve access to emergency care in the community. [20924]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is committed to making emergency and urgent care as local and accessible as possible. Community based general practitioners, out-of-hours providers, minor injury units and walk-in centres already provide the bulk of such care. Improving access further is a key part of the current public consultation "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say".

Avian Influenza

22. **Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to prepare for a potential pandemic of avian influenza. [20927]

Caroline Flint: The UK Government's Influenza Pandemic Plan was published on 19 October. The plan sets out our approach: to support the development of a vaccine against pandemic influenza, to build a stockpile of antiviral drugs to treat those who may become ill and to provide information to health professionals and the public.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what amounts of vaccine for an H5N1 strain of influenza she plans to stockpile for use in the first wave of an avian influenza pandemic before the actual strain has been identified; and whether she has issued a tender for a pandemic vaccine to be manufactured as soon as the strain is identified. [19132]

Caroline Flint: We plan to stockpile two to three million doses of H5N1 vaccine. The vaccine may offer some protection against a pandemic strain of influenza, if the pandemic is similar to the H5N1 strain currently circulating in South East Asia. The vaccine will be used for research and may be offered to health care workers if the risk of a pandemic rises significantly.

On 19 October, the Department announced that manufacturers were being invited to tender for a contract to supply future requirements for around 120 million doses of a vaccine specifically against the pandemic strain. We intend to use this vaccine to offer vaccination to the United Kingdom population and reduce the impact of a pandemic on society.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice is being issued to poultry owners on the possible effects of avian influenza on *(a)* their and *(b)* their families' health. [19140]

Caroline Flint: The Government recognise the need for sound practical and risk based guidance to be available to the keepers of poultry and other birds. A joint poultry industry and cross departmental working group has been established chaired by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with representatives from the Department of Health, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Health Protection Agency (HPA), Defra and the State Veterinary Service, and the poultry industry. The working group will publish guidance to poultry keepers and others shortly.

Responsibility for guidance lies jointly with the Department, the HPA and the HSE and generic advice for poultry owners, their families and others is provided on their respective websites.

St. George's Hospital, Tooting

23. **Martin Linton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the change has been in the funding of St. George's Hospital, Tooting since 1997. [20928]

Jane Kennedy: Audited accounts of the St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust 1997–98 to 2004–05 show that income at the trust has risen by £160.4 million from £173.1 million in 1997–98 to £333.5 million in 2004–05.

Mersey Regional Ambulance Service

24. **Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on plans to improve the Mersey regional ambulance service. [20929]

Mr. Byrne: Earlier this year the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust jointly commissioned, with its strategic health authority and primary care trusts, an independent review of its services, management and commissioning arrangements.

A formal strategic response to the plan will be ratified by the trust at the end of October.

Abortions (Overseas Residents)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the countries of residence of women listed as overseas residents in the abortion statistics for the last year for which information is available. [20166]

Caroline Flint: This information is contained in table 13 of the Department's statistical bulletin 2005/11 "Abortion Statistics, England and Wales: 2004", which is available at on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/4/11/75/74/04117574.pdf. Copies are also available in the Library.

ADHD

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which voluntary organisations dealing with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder receive funding from her Department; and how much. [18831]

Mr. Byrne: In 2005–06, the Department gave financial support to two voluntary organisations. They are ADHD UK Alliance, which received £20,000 and the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, which received £40,000.

Adverse Medical Incidents

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she made of the number of extra bed days caused by adverse incidents in NHS hospitals in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [18570]

Jane Kennedy: A research study of adverse events in two acute hospitals in Greater London (Vincent, Neale and Woloshynowych 2001) found that each adverse event led to an average of 8.5 additional days in hospital. The study extrapolated these results to England and Wales, estimating that there are approximately three million extra bed days a year as a result of patient safety incidents. During 2003–04, there were 57,571,000 bed days in England.

Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Government intend to publish the outcome of their review of the provision of allergy services; and if she will make a statement. [19760]

Mr. Byrne: In its response to the Health Committee report on the provision of allergy services, the Government undertook to carry out a review of the available data and research on the epidemiology of allergic conditions, the demand for and provision of treatment and the effectiveness of relevant interventions. We hope to complete this review of the evidence by the end of June 2006. It will inform decisions about what steps could be taken to address any gaps and pressures that it reveals.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much specialist allergy treatment is provided by the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority; and if she will make a statement. [19763]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Primary care trusts in partnership with local stakeholders, have the responsibility for deciding what services to provide for their populations, including those with allergies. They are best placed to understand local health needs and commission services to meet them.

Cancer

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patients below the age of 50 years the Essex strategic health authority area have been treated for breast cancer. [18778]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The data for the year 2003–04 show that Essex strategic health authority has treated 344 national health service patients below the age of 50 years for breast cancer.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the proportion of cancer patients who were not referred with suspected cancer and were therefore not covered by the two week wait in the last period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [18899]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of patients treated for cancer who were not referred urgently under the two week wait was 66.5 per cent. in the last quarter, April to June 2005. The Cancer Plan target of 31 days from diagnosis with cancer to first treatment, to be achieved from December 2005, picks up those patients who are referred with other conditions but who are subsequently diagnosed with cancer to ensure they receive prompt treatment.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time taken by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has been to carry out a treatment appraisal in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17788]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table.

	Number of published technology appraisals	*Average number of months between referral of the topic to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and publication of final guidance*
2000	17	9
2001	14	15
2002	22	17
2003	19	19
2004	11	24
2005[1]	6	20

[1] To end July.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government have considered setting up a separate advisory group to examine new cancer treatments; and if she will make a statement. [18322]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Professor Mike Richards, the national cancer director, regularly chairs a group of experts set up specifically to identify and consider new cancer drugs, prioritise them for potential referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and provide advice to the Department.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of cancer patients started their treatment *(a)* within 31 days of a decision to treat and *(b)* within 62 days of an urgent general practitioner referral in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each NHS trust in each of the last three years. [18564]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In England during the first quarter of 2005–06, 92.6 per cent. of patients started treatment within 31 days of cancer diagnosis, and 77.1 per cent. of patients started treatment within 62 days of urgent referral by their general practitioner.

Information on percentages of cancer patients who start their treatment within 31 days of a decision to treat and within 62 days of ah urgent GP referral in each strategic health authority and each national health service trust has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what new initiatives she plans to reduce the incidence of lung cancer in women. [20786]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The 2004 Health Development Agency's publication, "The Smoking Epidemic in England" estimated that eight out of 10 female lung cancer deaths are smoking attributable. The best way to reduce the incidence of lung cancer in women is to persuade them to give up smoking.

Since 1998, the Government have put in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle smoking to reduce the deaths caused by smoking. The strategy focuses on action to discourage people from ever starting and help for all smokers, of whatever age and sex, to quit. We are aiming to create a climate where non-smoking is the norm.

We have banned almost all tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion. Our highly effective national anti-smoking education campaign is designed to reach all. People who wish to give up smoking can get help from the national health service stop smoking services. In 2004–05, 57 per cent. of people accessing the NHS Stop Smoking Services were women. We set out proposals to bring in new measures to improve the way the NHS helps smokers to give up in our White Paper, "Choosing Health". We will reduce exposure to second hand smoke and, through a staged approach, make almost all enclosed public places and workplaces smoke-free. In addition, this year we ran an education campaign on the impact of smoking targeted at young women.

Together this strategy has helped reduce smoking rates in women in England from 26 per cent. in 1998 to 24 per cent. in 2004.

Cardiac Specialists (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors specialising in cardiac care there are in Kent hospitals. [20073]

Caroline Flint: The number of doctors specialising in cardiac care in Kent hospitals is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): Medical staff within the cardiology specialty by specified organisations, as at 30 September 2004

		Number (headcount)	Full-time equivalents (fte)
Total for specified organisations		30	26
Dartford and Gravesham Acute Health Services National Health Service Trust	RN7	3	3
East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	RW	13	12
East Kent NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust	RTM	—	—
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	RWF	10	7
Medway NHS Trust	RPA	4	4
West Kent NHS and Social Care Trust	RXJ	—	—

'—' Denotes zero.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Darent Valley Hospital

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress Darent Valley Hospital has made towards achieving its accident and emergency targets. [20054]

Caroline Flint: The accident and emergency four-hour target and on-going operational standard requires trusts to ensure that 98 per cent. of patients are admitted or discharged within a maximum of four hours of arrival. Dartford and Gravesham National Health Service Trust achieved 98.6 per cent. in April-June 2005.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress Darent Valley Hospital has made towards achieving its waiting lists target in each department. [20055]

Caroline Flint: The Department collects information on hospital waiting lists targets at national health service trust level. The latest data on progress that is being made by Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust in achieving its waiting lists target in each department are shown in the table.

Waiting times for first outpatient appointment, Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, quarter ended June 2005

Weeks		*GP written referral requests not yet seen at the end of quarter who have been waiting:*					
Specialty	*Specialty name*	*Less than 4*	*4 to <8*	*8 to <13*	*13 to <17*	*17 to <21*	*21 plus*
100	General surgery	234	177	45	6	0	0
101	Urology	73	112	68	3	0	0
110	Trauma and Orthopaedics	171	252	137	11	0	0
300	General medicine	104	109	80	4	0	0
303	Haematology (clinical)	6	18	28	1	0	0
320	Cardiology	15	50	38	1	0	0
400	Neurology	0	20	15	4	0	0
410	Rheumatology	59	46	97	8	0	0
420	Paediatrics	35	49	51	3	0	0
430	Geriatric medicine	25	17	8	1	0	0
502	Gynaecology	158	171	42	2	0	0
999	All specialties	880	1,021	609	44	0	0

Source:
Department of Health form QM08.

Deanery Funding

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been allocated to deanery funding in the NHS in each year since 1997. [19672]

Mr. Byrne: Central funding for postgraduate medical and dental education and training since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Amount (£ million)
1996–97	533
1997–98	592
1998–99	621
1999–2000	657
2000–01	821
2001–02	824
2002–03	1,156
2003–04	1,235
2004–05	1,337
2005–06	1,405

This represents an increase of 164 per cent. or £872 million. These sums formed part of the overall national health service training budgets allocated to regional health authorities and more recently to strategic health authorities. The amounts that postgraduate deaneries actually received will have been determined locally in the light of local priorities and national workforce targets.

Dementia

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what specific training is provided to doctors, nurses and other health care professionals in treating and caring for those with dementia. [2179]

Mr. Byrne: This is the responsibility of the appropriate regulatory bodies that set standards for the pre-registration training of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals and approve the education institutions that provide the training and determine the curricula.

Post-registration training needs for national health service staff are determined against local NHS priorities, through appraisal processes and training needs analyses informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service.

The content and standard of postgraduate medical training is the responsibility of the United Kingdom competent authorities, the specialist training authority for specialist medicine and, for general practice, the joint committee on postgraduate training for general practice. These bodies have a continuing interest in ensuring that doctors are equipped to deal with the problems they will encounter in practice.

Dentistry

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has issued guidance to English primary care trusts relating to the dental treatment of patients resident in Wales. [19069]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No guidance has been issued to primary care trusts (PCTs) relating to dental treatment of patients resident in Wales. However, PCTs and local health boards in Wales already have a statutory duty to co-operate in the provision of national health service services.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the number and percentage of dental practitioners accepting new NHS patients, in *(a)* England and *(b)* each primary care trust in each of the last four years. [19173]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The last estimate of dentists accepting new patients showed that, as of May 2004, 36.2 per cent. of practices were taking on new patients.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to lay before Parliament *(a)* the National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulations 2006 and *(b)* the National Health Service (Personal Dental Services Agreements) Regulations 2006. [19302]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We expect to lay both the National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulations 2006 and the National Health Service (Personal Dental Services Agreements) Regulations 2006 before Parliament by the end of 2005.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to publish her response to the consultation on the Draft National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations 2006; and when she expects to lay this measure before Parliament. [19347]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We plan to publish the response to the consultation on the draft National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations during November 2005; we expect to lay the regulations before Parliament by the end of 2005.

Diet

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average daily consumption of fruit and vegetable portions has been in each of the last five years for (*a*) adults and (*b*) children. [19002]

Caroline Flint: The average daily consumption of fruit and vegetable portions is shown in the tables for adults and children. The Department is unable to provide data for the last five years, as questions on fruit and vegetable consumption were first included in 2001. Data for 2003 are the most recent available.

Average fruit and vegetable portion consumption for adults, by gender England—2001 to 2003

	Men	Women	Total
Adults, aged 16 and over			
2001	3.3	3.5	3.4
2002	3.3	3.5	3.4
2003	3.3	3.6	3.4
Bases			
2001	6,966	8,681	15,647
2002	3,317	4,077	7,394
2003	6,602	8,234	14,836

Average fruit and vegetable portion consumption for children, by gender England—2001 to 2003

	Boys	Girls	All children
Children aged 5 to 15			
2001	2.4	2.6	2.5
2002	2.5	2.6	2.6
2003	2.4	2.6	2.5
Bases (weighted)			
2001	1,498	1,560	3,058
2002	3,367	3,236	6,603
2003	1,301	1,342	2,643

Notes

1. Because the selection of children is limited to two per family, figures and bases for children have been weighted to compensate for the non-selection of other children in families of three or more.
2. One portion of fruit or vegetables is 80 grams.

Source

Health Survey for England 2001—fruit and vegetable consumption. Data can be found in trend tables AD13_F&V and CH8_F&V on the Department's website at:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PublishedSurvey/HealthSurveyForEngland/HealthSurveyResults/HealthSurveyResultsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4098913&chk=4DPdlh

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the replacement of the chief executive of the East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust. [20926]

Caroline Flint: The appointment of chief executives in the national health service is a matter for individual trusts subject to NHS terms and conditions of employment.

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority has advised that a new chief executive of East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust was appointed on a one year rolling contract which commenced on 10 October this year.

Food Standards Agency

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints have been received by the Food Standards Agency concerning adverse effects of aspartame in each year since 2000 and what percentage this represents of the total number of complaints received in each year by the Food Standards Agency. [18944]

Caroline Flint: Since 2000, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has received a total of 20 complaints concerning adverse effects related to aspartame consumption. A breakdown of the number of complaints that were received each year is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Number of complaints (aspartame consumption) 2000–05

	Number received
2000	1
2001	1
2002	2
2003	8
2004	4
2005	4

The FSA also received a total of 151 complaints through the additives survivors network (ASN) in the form of standard letters/proforma during a campaign by the network during a period between 2000 and 2001. A breakdown of the number of complaints that were received each year is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Number of complaints received from ASN 2000–05

	Number received
2000	140
2001	11
2002	0
2003	0
2004	0
2005	0

The FSA also receives general correspondence on aspartame. Total complaints received by the FSA address a number of issues, both food and non-food related, and are dealt accordingly by relevant policy divisions in the FSA. A record of correspondence of this nature is not held centrally by the FSA.

Genitourinary Clinics

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on progress towards the 48 hour appointment target for genitourinary clinics by 2008. [21533]

Caroline Flint: The latest data published by the Health Protection Agency shows that 45 per cent. of patients are seen within 48 hours at genitourinary

medicine (GUM) clinics. Primary care trusts and strategic health authorities have already developed plans on how they will meet the target of 48 hour access through the local delivery planning process. To support this, the Department is investing an additional £130 million for GUM services and infrastructure in 2006–07 and 2007–08 to enable clinics to expand their services and reduce waiting times. An additional £15 million capital funding has also been recently allocated.

Health Services (Leeds)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the services provided by Leeds primary care trusts; how many staff are employed to provide each service; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of these services. [18927]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows how many staff are employed within the Leeds primary care trusts (PCTs) as at 30 September 2004. In the 2004–05 performance review by the Healthcare Commission, the Leeds PCTs received the following ratings:

	Star rating
East Leeds PCT	1
Leeds North East PCT	2
Leeds North West PCT	1
Leeds West PCT	1
South Leeds PCT	1

Hospital, public health medicine, community health services (HCHS) doctors, general medical practitioners, HCHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff and GP practice nurses within Leeds PCTs, as at 30 September 2004

Number (headcount)

	East Leeds PCT	*Leeds North East PCT*	*Leeds North West PCT*	*Leeds West PCT*	*South Leeds PCT*
All Staff	557	368	421	264	348
Of which:					
All doctors	151	126	145	70	126
Of which:					
HCHS doctors[1]	42	2	4	4	30
General medical practitioners[2]	109	124	141	66	96
Nurses	406	242	276	194	222
Of which:					
Qualified nursing midwifery and health visiting staff	354	178	208	149	173
GP practice nurses	52	64	68	45	49

[1] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals.
[2] General medical practitioners includes contracted GPs, general medical service (GMS) others, personal medical service (PMS) others, GP retainers and GP registrars. Prior to September 2004, this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP retainers, GP registrars, salaried doctors (Para 52 SEA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Sources:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre GMS and PMS statistics.
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

Herceptin (Devon and Cornwall)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated cost is of the decision by Devon and Cornwall primary care trusts to fund Herceptin for early stage cancer. [20825]

Caroline Flint: Information on the estimated cost of the decision by Devon and Cornwall primary care trusts (PCTs) to fund Herceptin for early stage breast cancer is not collected centrally. We are already putting record amounts of new investment into the national health service—between 2003 and 2008 NHS expenditure in England will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for PCTs to decide how best to spend these resources taking into account local priorities.

PCTs have many competing priorities but cancer is a national and local priority. Every PCT will have a sizeable number of people in their area who will be diagnosed with the disease each year. PCTs will need to ensure that they allocate sufficient resource to meet their local contribution to tackling cancer care or other areas.

It may be appropriate in some circumstances for patients to be prescribed an unlicensed drug such as Herceptin. However, this should be the exception and not the rule because the licensing process is there to protect patient safety. Such decisions need to be taken following discussions with patients to ensure they are aware of the potential risks.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many items of correspondence her Department has received objecting to the plans to close the Walnuttree and St. Leonard's hospitals in Sudbury. [17698]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 14 October 2005, the Department had received a total of 5,287 items of correspondence relating to this matter.

Hospital Treatments

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private (i) in-patient procedures and (ii) out-patient consultations were carried out in each of the hospitals managed by the Leeds NHS Teaching Hospital Trust in the past five years, broken down by specialty. [18911]

Mr. Byrne: Information showing the number of national health service and private in-patient procedures carried out by the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 has been placed in the Library.

Information showing the number of NHS and private out-patient consultations at the trust is available on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivitv/data_requests/outpatient_attendances.htm.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many copies of the Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation have been produced; at what cost; and if she will make a statement; [20195]

(2) which organisations were sent copies of the Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation; how many were sent to each; and if she will make a statement; [20196]

(3) for what reasons her Department chose 16 August to publish the Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation; and if she will make a statement; [20197]

(4) if she will place in the Library responses to the Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation; and if she will make a statement. [20198]

Caroline Flint: The consultation document was published as soon as it was ready, taking account of the wider timetable of Government announcements and the need to respond to the Science and Technology Committee's report on "Human Reproductive Technologies and the Law". In producing the consultation document, account was taken of a wide range of views and opinions, including the oral and written evidence submitted to the Science and Technology Committee's year-long inquiry, reaction to the Committee's recommendations, and issues raised over a number of years about the regulation of assisted reproduction and embryology.

In order to encourage a wide range of responses to the consultation, copies of the document have been made available in variety of ways, including by viewing or downloading from the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/consulations/fs/en, or by request from the Department's publications order line on 08710 555 455. Copies have also been issued by the Department directly to key stakeholders and other people and organisations who have expressed an interest in the review. This variety of ways of access means that it is not possible to say exactly which organisations have received the document.

3,020 copies of the document have been printed, at a cost of £9,395. After the consultation, we will place a copy of the responses in the Library.

Mayday Health Trust

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects Mayday Health Trust to sign contracts for the construction of Purley Hospital. [19085]

Jane Kennedy: Mayday Healthcare National Health Service Trust, on behalf of the NHS partners in the scheme, is currently negotiating with the commercial developers. Although no date has yet been set for contract signing, the trust remains committed to progressing the project.

NHS Commissioning

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what basis the budgets to be delegated from primary care trusts to commissioning GP practices under practice-based commissioning will be determined; [18720]

(2) if she will provide a definition of the maximum and the minimum responsibilities GP practices will be able to take on under practice-based commissioning. [18722]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Indicative commissioning budgets for practices or localities are decided at a local level through discussions between the primary care trust (PCT) and the individual practice or locality.

There is no nationally agreed set of maximum or minimum responsibilities. Instead, commissioning responsibilities are agreed between the practice and the appropriate PCT.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on the length of the consultation period on Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS. [19151]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities are expected to submit proposals for local commissioning arrangements to the Department by 15 October. The Department, and an external panel representing key interests, will consider, against a set of criteria published on 28 July, whether the proposals can go forward for full, statutory, local consultation, lasting for three months, to begin before the end of the year. Decisions will be taken in the light of that three-month consultation period.

NHS Continuing Care

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to standardise the eligibility criteria for NHS continuing care used by strategic health authorities. [20057]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is currently working with the strategic health authorities and stakeholders to produce a national approach to continuing care. This is

expected to improve consistency and ease of understanding of the system, resulting in a single set of national eligibility criteria and a suitable assessment process for access to NHS Continuing Care, which we expect to publish early in 2006.

NHS Finance (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of NHS trusts in Gloucestershire. [20925]

Jane Kennedy: In 2004–05 11 out of the 13 national health service trusts covered by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority achieved financial balance. The remaining two NHS trusts reported a deficit.

NHS Services (Pudsey)

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses were employed by the NHS in health facilities serving Pudsey in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2004. [18923]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine, community health services (HCHS) doctors, general medical practitioners, HCHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff and GP practice nurses for selected organisations, as at 1997, 2001 and 2004

Numbers (headcount)

	East Leeds Primary Care Trust (PCT)	*Leeds Community and Mental Health Service Teaching National Health Service Trust*	*Leeds Health Authority*	*Leeds North East PCT*	*Leeds North West PCT*
1997					
All staff	[1]—	1,560	734	[1]—	[1]—
Of which					
All doctors	[1]—	160	464	[1]—	[1]—
Of which					
HCHS doctors[2]	[1]—	160	21	[1]—	[1]—
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	[1]—	[1]—	443	[1]—	[1]—
Nurses	[1]—	1,400	270	[1]—	[1]—
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	[1]—	1,400	7	[1]—	[1]—
GP practice nurses	[1]—	[1]—	263	[1]—	[1]—
2001					
All staff	157	1,726	23	160	175
Of which					
All doctors	100	210	14	102	117
Of which					
HCHS doctors[2]	[1]—	210	14	[1]—	[1]—
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	100	[1]—	[1]—	102	117
Nurses	57	1,516	9	58	58
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	[1]—	1,516	9	[1]—	[1]—
GP practice nurses	57	[1]—	[1]—	58	58
2004					
All staff	554	997	[1]—	359	417
Of which					
All doctors	148	177	[1]—	117	141
Of which					
HCHS doctors[3]	42	177	[1]—	2	4
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	106	[1]—	[1]—	115	137
Nurses	406	820	[1]—	242	276
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	354	820	[1]—	178	208
GP practice nurses	52	[1]—	[1]—	64	68

	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	*Leeds West PCT*	*South Leeds PCT*	*United Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust*	*West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service*
1997					
All staff	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	3,053	[1]—
Of which					
All doctors	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	695	[1]—
Of which					
HCHS doctors[2]	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	695	[1]—
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	Leeds West PCT	South Leeds PCT	United Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust	West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service
Nurses	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	2,358	[1]—
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	2,358	[1]—
GP practice nurses	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
2001					
All staff	5,781	96	133	[1]—	88
Of which					
All doctors	1,310	62	86	[1]—	[1]—
Of which					
HCHS doctors[2]	1,310	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	[1]—	62	86	[1]—	[1]—
Nurses	4,471	[1]—	47	[1]—	88
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	4,471	34	[1]—	[1]—	88
GP practice nurses	[1]—	34	47	[1]—	[1]—
2004					
All staff	6,376	264	347	[1]—	6
Of which					
All doctors	1,588	70	125	[1]—	[1]—
Of which					
HCHS doctors[2]	1,588	4	30	[1]—	[1]—
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)	[1]—	66	95	[1]—	[1]—
Nurses	4,788	194	222	[1]—	6
Of which					
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	4,788	149	173	[1]—	6
GP practice nurses	[1]—	45	49	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Denotes data not applicable.
[2] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals, personal medical service (PMS) salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Note:
All data as at 30 September, except 1997 GP and practice nurse data which is as at 1 October.

Sources:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre GMS and PMS statistics.
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

NHS Structure (Essex)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for reorganisation of the NHS organisational structures in Essex. [20913]

Mr. Byrne: First ideas for a stronger local national health service in Essex have been developed locally by Essex Strategic Health Authority in collaboration with partner organisations and stakeholder groups.

These plans have now been submitted to the Department. After initial assessments, all options for the reorganisation of the NHS in Essex (and indeed all other areas) shall be subject to a full, statutory public consultation. No decisions on the final form of new NHS structures will be taken until after these consultations have been completed.

Obesity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on obesity management in the NHS in each of the last five years. [19021]

Caroline Flint: Information on the amount spent by the national health service on obesity management is not held centrally. However, the National Audit Office report, "Tackling Obesity in England", published in 2001, estimated that the direct cost to the NHS of treating obesity and its consequences in 1998 was £480 million. As part of its inquiry into obesity, the Health Select Committee estimated that in 2002 the direct cost to the NHS was between £990 million and £1,225 million.

Out-patient Appointments (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was in the last three years for an out-patient appointment in Gravesham. [20071]

Caroline Flint: The estimated average time waited for first out-patient appointment following general practitioner written referrals for Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley primary care trust (commissioner based) is shown in the table.

Quarter ended (June)	Median (weeks)
2003	7.9
2004	7.9
2005	6.9

Source:

Department of Health form QM08R

Paediatric Nurses

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average age of paediatric nurses employed in the national health service has been in each year since 1997. [18768]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified paediatric nursing in England by level and average age as at 30 September each specified year

Headcount

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Average age of qualified paediatric nursing staff	37	38	39	39	39	41	41	41
Nurse consultant	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	38	43	45	44
Nurse manager	41	42	42	42	44	44	44	44
Registered sick children's nurse	34	35	36	36	36	36	36	36
Other 1st level	34	35	36	36	36	37	36	37
Other 2nd level	39	40	41	41	42	44	42	43

n/a = not available

Notes:

1. Nurse consultant figures are unavailable prior to 2001.
2. Average ages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

Patient Records

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust on sending confidential patient records to South Africa for processing. [18825]

Caroline Flint: We are aware of reports that Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals National Health Service Trust currently employ a South African company to type up medical notes.

It is the responsibility of local NHS clinicians and managers to ensure the confidentiality of patient information in these, as in all other circumstances.

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority has advised that the trust has followed guidelines published by the information commissioner and the European Union relating to the transfer of personal data outside the EU.

Pregnancy Health

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to help pregnant women who *(a)* smoke and *(b)* are addicted to drugs; and if she will make a statement. [20611]

Caroline Flint: Midwives provide the majority of care for pregnant mothers as well as advice and support on healthy lifestyles including smoking and drug misuse.

The Government aim to reach pregnant smokers through the ongoing "partners" education campaign, which provides information about smoking, the benefits to the health of both mother and baby in quitting, and how partners and families can provide support.

The national health service stop smoking services were allocated an additional £6 million in 2001–02 to 2002–03 to target smoking in pregnancy and to provide specialist advisers to help pregnant smokers to quit. Pregnant women can also access our free, dedicated helpline for all smokers on 0800 169 0 169 and the specific helpline for pregnant women smokers on 0800 169 9 169. Local services are expected to liaise with Sure Start to ensure the most effective delivery of service to the women who need it most.

Drug misuse among pregnant women is identified through ante-natal care from their midwife or local general practitioner. Where identified, an assessment is carried out and the appropriate treatment and support arranged both during and post pregnancy. To deliver high quality care services for pregnant drug users, there is a co-ordinated approach between drug services, maternity services and children's health and social care services. Pregnant women are a vulnerable group as far as drugs misuse is concerned and where appropriate will be given top priority.

Obstetric departments are advised to develop good links with local drug specialists and GPs and the local social services. All local statutory authorities should have a written policy about drug misusing parents and all professionals involved should be aware of this policy.

Pressure Sores

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has achieved its 5 per cent. per annum target for reduction of pressure sores. [19863]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 231W

Progress Educational Trust

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what criteria were used in selecting the Progress Educational Trust to conduct an online consultation on behalf of the Department of Health as part of its review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act—A Public Consultation; how much funding has been allocated to the Trust for this purpose; and when she expects to receive the results; [18930]

(2) what assessment she made of possible conflict of interest for the Progress Educational Trust in asking it to conduct an online consultation on behalf of her Department as part of its review of Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act—A Public Consultation; [18931]

(3) which organisations were considered in deciding who should conduct an online consultation on behalf of her Department as part of its review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act—A Public Consultation. [18932]

Caroline Flint: The Department launched a public consultation on the review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 on 16 August 2005. The closing date for responses is 25 November 2005. The Department is keen to receive responses from as many individuals and organisations as possible. In order to encourage this we have set up an online consultation response facility on the Department's website. We have not asked anyone to conduct this online consultation on behalf of the Department.

Progress Educational Trust is a voluntary organisation which aims to increase public awareness and engagement on issues in assisted reproduction and human genetics. Progress has applied for, and been awarded, a number of grants through the Department's scheme of grants for voluntary sector organisations, known as Section 64 funding. Progress is currently in receipt of £11,210 to host an online discussion forum to encourage public discussion and debate on the issues raised by the Government's review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990.

Smoking

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the percentage of *(a)* males and *(b)* females between the ages of 16 and 19 years in England who are regular smokers. [20787]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table. This is the most recent data available.

Percentage of smokers between the ages of 16 and 19, by gender—England 2003

				Percentage/Number
	Prevalence	*Unweighted base*	*Weighted base (000)*	*Unweighted base*
Male	26	400	1,025	400
Female	24	384	981	384
Total	25	784	2,006	784

Source:
Office for National Statistics
General Household Survey 2003–04

Struck-off Doctors

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors have been struck-off by the General Medical Council since 2001. [19389]

Jane Kennedy: The collection of this information is not a Government responsibility and therefore it is not available centrally. I suggest the hon. Member writes to the General Medical Council, St. James's Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6FQ for the information requested.

Students (Alcohol Consumption)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of university students who consume alcohol on a *(a)* daily and *(b)* weekly basis. [20968]

Caroline Flint: The number of university students who consume alcohol on a daily and weekly basis is shown in table one.

Table 1: Students drinking days last week, England 2003

Drinking days last week	*University students*	*All adults*
0 days	35	33
1 day	20	19
2 days	18	14
3 days	11	10
4 days	4	6
5 days	6	4
6 days	3	3
7 days	4	11
Bases		
Weighted (000)	811	35,307
Unweighted	315	14,996

The number of university students who consume alcohol on a weekly basis is shown in table two.

Table 2: Students drinking last week, England 2003

	Number
University Students	65
All adults	67

Notes:

1. University students are defined as follows:

(a) students studying at a university or college including sixth form college

(b) training for a qualification in nursing, physiotherapy, or a or a similar medical subject.

(c) on a part-time course at university or college including day release and block release

2. The General Household Survey collects information from people living in private households. It does not cover students living in halls of residence.

3. The drinking answers were obtained from the following question about drinking days:

Ask if respondent has had an alcoholic drink in the last week.

On how many days out of the last seven did you have an alcoholic drink?

Source:
Office for National Statistics 2003–04 General Household Survey.

Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute beds have been closed in the current year in each hospital trust within the Surrey and Sussex Health Authority area. [19000]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table. These are the net changes in bed numbers by type—comparing 2003–04 and 2004–05. This is at trust level and includes figures for non acute trusts.

Acute bed closures—Surrey and Sussex Health Authority

Organisation name	*2003-04*	*2004-05*	*Change*
Surrey and Sussex SHA	4,931	4,748	-183
Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals National Health Service Trust	560	561	1
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	944	863	-81
East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT)	0	19	19
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	695	697	2
Frimley Park Hospital NHS Trust	468	481	13
Guildford and Waverley PCT	54	54	0
North Surrey PCT	8	8	0
Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust	400	409	9
Royal West Sussex NHS Trust	498	445	-53
South Downs Health NHS Trust	52	52	0
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	593	535	-58
Surrey Heath and Woking PCT	12	12	0
Sussex Downs and Weald PCT	105	80	-25
The Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust	75	74	-1
Western Sussex PCT	57	45	-12
Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust	409	412	3

Tuberculosis

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the programme for vaccinations against tuberculosis. [19499]

Caroline Flint: The joint committee on vaccination and immunisation, an independent expert group that advises the Department, has been reviewing the BCG vaccination policy for a number of years.

Based on this group's recommendations, the Chief Medical Officer announced on 6 July that the current Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination programme in the United Kingdom would change, away from the universal vaccination through the schools BCG programme to a selective vaccination of high risk infants and other groups.

This decision has brought the UK in line with the recommendation of the World Health Organization and BCG programmes across much of the rest of the world.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidences of tuberculosis there were in each local health authority in each of the past five years. [19502]

Caroline Flint: Information on the incidences of tuberculosis recorded by local authorities in each of the five years has been placed in the Library.

Ulcerative Colitis/Crohn's Disease

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to draw up guidelines on treatments and standards of care for individuals suffering from *(a)* ulcerative colitis and *(b)* Crohn's disease. [20059]

Mr. Byrne: We have no plans to draw up guidelines for the treatment of those suffering from ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

The standards for health and social care for such sufferers are covered by the national service framework for long-term conditions, published on 10 March 2005, and "Supporting People with Long-term Conditions—An NHS and Social Care Model to support innovation and integration" published on 5 January 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access Officers

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make the appointment of access officers by local authorities mandatory; and if he will make a statement. [17896]

Mrs. McGuire: Local authorities are already subject to duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 not to discriminate against disabled people in employment or the provision of services, and amendments made by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will ensure that all the activities of public authorities are covered by the 1995 Act. These duties include the need to make positive adjustments to ensure disabled people are not less favourably treated.

The 2005 Act also places new duties on public authorities requiring them actively to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. By December 2006, local authorities and other listed public authorities will be required to publish Disability Equality Schemes setting out how they will implement this new duty. It will be mandatory to involve disabled people in determining an authority's priorities and action plan, but the Government do not believe it is right to specify in legislation the particular actions to be taken by authorities in order to promote equality of opportunity. This is because the implementation of the duty will maximise the inclusion of disabled people only if it fully reflects local circumstances and the priorities of local disabled people.

The Disability Rights Commission will issue guidance to assist authorities in developing action plans that genuinely address the needs of disabled people and will oversee and enforce the implementation of the duty to ensure authorities are taking the actions required of them.

Carer's Allowance

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of the carer's allowance was in each of the past 10 years; how many people received the carer's allowance in each year; and what the average received was. [16282]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following tables.

Table 1: Invalid care allowance/carer's allowance

	Expenditure (£ million)	Case load[1] (Thousand)	Average weekly amount (£)
1995-96	618	308	37.2
1996-97	738	349	38.7
1997-98	748	371	39.6
1998-99	786	373	41.4
1999-2000	825	375	43.1
2000-01	854	376	43.5
2001-02	932	391	44.8
2002-03	995	408	45.1
2003-04	1,051	428	45.6
2004-05	1,102	444	45.9

[1] Case load includes suspended cases, cases that are not in receipt of payment because their entitlement is under investigation.

Table 2: Invalid care allowance/carer's allowance

	Expenditure (£ million)	Case load[1] (Thousand)	Average weekly amount (£)
2002-03	995	397,000	45.1
2003-04	1,051	416,000	45.6
2004-05	1,102	432,000	45.9

[1] Case load excludes suspended cases. Case load estimates on this basis are not available prior to 2002-03.

Notes:

1. The average weekly amount is rounded to the nearest ten pence.
2. The case load estimates and average weekly amounts are financial year averages and derived from quarterly statistical data extracts. Figures for the years 1999-2000 and 2000-01 are estimated due to lack of suitable information.
3. The case load estimates exclude cases where an allowance is not paid despite entitlement due to the overlapping benefit rules.
4. The expenditure figures until 2003-04 are out-turn while the figure for 2004-05 is estimated out-turn. The expenditure figures are based on data from the departmental accounting systems.
5. The case load and average weekly amounts, when grossed up to annual totals do not precisely match the expenditure. This is because the statistical data have only five "snapshots" which are used to estimate annual averages. Furthermore, these snapshots fail to capture a number of new cases that are in process at any point time.
6. The figures quoted are marginally different to those previously published due to methodological changes and some minor adjustments.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families received child maintenance payments in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency in *(a)* 2002-03, *(b)* 2003-04 and *(c)* 2004-05; and if he will make a statement. [15888]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families received child maintenance payments in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency in *(a)* 2002-03, *(b)* 2003-04 and *(c)* 2004-05; and if he will make a statement. [16990]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available at constituency level.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the compliance rate for Child Support Agency cases for each quarter from 2000-01 to 2005-06; and if he will make a statement. [988]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 25 October 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what his estimate is of the compliance rate for Child Support Agency cases for each quarter from 2000-01 to 2005-06; and if he will make a statement.

The Agency has two measures of compliance. The case compliance rate is the percentage of cases for which a payment has been received, out of all of the cases for which a payment was due in a given period. The cash compliance rate is the percentage of the total amount of maintenance due to be paid in a given period which has actually been paid.

Information regarding the case and cash compliance rates is in the tables which I have enclosed with this letter.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Case compliance

Quarter-ending	New scheme case compliance	All old scheme case compliance	Percentage Overall agency case compliance
2000			
June	[1]—	71	71
September	[1]—	71	71
December	[1]—	72	72
2001			
March	[1]—	72	72
June	[1]—	72	72
September	[1]—	73	73
December	[1]—	73	73
2002			
March	[1]—	74	74
June	[1]—	75	75
September	[1]—	76	76
December	[1]—	76	76
2003			
March	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
June	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
September	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
December	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
2004			
March	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
June	61	73	71
September	62	73	70
December	64	72	70
2005			
March	66	72	70

Cash compliance

Quarter-ending	New scheme cash compliance	All old scheme cash compliance	Percentage Overall agency cash compliance
2000			
June	[1]—	69	69
September	[1]—	70	70
December	[1]—	69	69
2001			
March	[1]—	71	71
June	[1]—	71	71
September	[1]—	70	70
December	[1]—	70	70

Cash compliance

Quarter-ending	*New scheme cash compliance*	*All old scheme cash compliance*	*Percentage Overall agency cash compliance*
2002			
March	[1]—	74	74
June	[1]—	71	71
September	[1]—	73	73
December	[1]—	74	74
2003			
March	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
June	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
September	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
December	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
2004			
March	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
June	50	71	68
September	52	70	66
December	55	70	67
2005			
March	61	73	70

[1] The new scheme has been in operation since March 2003, so data prior to this date is purely old scheme information and therefore overall Agency compliance by virtue of being the sole source of data.

[2] New scheme data, and that for old scheme on the new IT system, for the period March 2003 to March 2004 is not robust therefore it has been excluded. It is hoped that this will be available in the near future.

n/a = not available.

Notes:

1. Case compliance is measured on a rolling-last-quarter basis for both schemes as this best demonstrates performance.
2. Cash compliance is measured on a three-month rolling average basis as this best demonstrates performance.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the backlog of uncleared Child Support Agency cases for each quarter from March 2001 to July 2005 in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency; and if he will make a statement. [15887]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the backlog of uncleared Child Support Agency cases for each quarter from March 2001 to August 2005 in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency; and if he will make a statement. [16994]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available for Scotland or at constituency level.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints originating from Scotland have been received by the Child Support Agency in each year since 1997; how many went forward for adjudication; how many have been *(a)* fully and *(b)* partially upheld; and if he will make a statement. [15889]

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints have been received by the Child Support Agency in each year since 1999, broken down by originating London borough; how many went forward for adjudication; how many have been *(a)* fully and *(b)* partially upheld; and if he will make a statement. [16941]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available for Scotland or at London borough or constituency level.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of IR591 on the levels of child maintenance being paid through the Child Support Agency by non-resident parents whose main source of income is from self-employment. [18785]

Mr. Plaskitt: No assessment has been made on the impact of IR591 for child support maintenance purposes.

This is because IR591 partly relates to the Corporation Tax liability of limited companies who distribute some of their profits to shareholders instead of reinvesting it in the business. A non-resident parent who works for their own limited company will be an employee of that company (usually a director) and will not be self-employed. Child Support will only be interested in the earned income of that non-resident parent, and not in the profits (and associated Corporation Tax liability) made by that company.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many former Child Support Agency employees were awarded compensation from employment tribunals in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04, *(c)* 2004–05 and *(d)* 2005–06. [21227]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The Child Support Agency's human resource records on employment tribunals only go as far as the third quarter of the operational year 2003–04 (beginning 1 October 2003) and extends to the second quarter of the current year (ending 30 September 2005).

According to the Agency's records during this period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005 only one former employee of the Agency has been awarded compensation as a direct result of an employment tribunal.

Disability Benefit

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men are claiming disability benefit in (i) the Tees Valley and (ii) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. [18697]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance and attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr Terry Moran. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 25 October 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me, as Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, to reply to your question concerning how many women and men are claiming disability benefit in the Tees Valley and Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency.

The information requested is as follows:

Disability living allowance and attendance allowance by gender in the Tees Valley at 28 February 2005

Thousand

	Disability living allowance			Attendance allowance		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Tees Valley	39.4	20.5	18.9	15.5	5.0	10.5
Darlington	5.1	2.8	2.4	2.4	0.7	1.7
Hartlepool	6.3	3.2	3.1	2.3	0.8	1.5
Middlesbrough	9.5	5.0	4.6	3.3	1.1	2.1
Redcar and Cleveland	8.8	4.4	4.4	3.6	1.2	2.4
Stockton-on-Tees	9.7	5.1	4.6	3.9	1.1	2.7

Notes:
1. Cases where payment of benefit has been suspended are excluded.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
3. Totals may not sum due to founding.
4. Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
5. Numbers marked "*" are based on a very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.
6. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
7. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Disability living allowance and attendance allowance, by gender, in the parliamentary constituency of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland at February 2005

Thousand

	Disability living allowance			Attendance allowance		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	5.3	2.9	2.4	2.2	0.7	1.5

Notes:
1. A small number of claimants may be getting both AA and DLA.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
6. Cases where payment of benefit has been suspended are excluded.
7. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Source:
DWP, Information Centre (IFD), 5 per cent. data

I hope this is helpful.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applications for disability living allowance have been rejected in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17830]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Disability living allowance: Number of new claims disallowed in Great Britain in each year from 2001-05

	Number
2001	196,885
2002	194,605
2003	215,135
2004	234,180
2005	149,730

Notes:
1. The figures taken from the Management Information System (MIS) computer system and are rounded to the nearest five. Those for 2001 to 2004 are for calendar years (January to December), and those for 2005 are for the period from January 2005 to August 2005.
2. The figures are for new claims disallowed and do not reflect any changes to the outcome of those claims resulting from any subsequent reconsideration or appeal.

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions, Information Centre, 100 per cent. data.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many disability living allowance applications have been *(a)* approved, *(b)* rejected and *(c)* approved subject to a reduction in components (or increase) in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005. [18179]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Disability living allowance: numbers of new claims allowed and disallowed; numbers of awards reduced, increased or varied on supersession, revision or appeal; and numbers of renewal claims in which the award was lower or higher or varied from the award made on a previous claim in Great Britain in 2004 and 2005[1]

	2004	2005
New claims allowed	210,095	132,550
New claims disallowed	234,180	149,730
Awards reduced on supersession or revision	3,100	1,810
Awards increased on supersession or revision	54,205	35,105
Awards varied on supersession or revision	10,070	4,230
Awards reduced by an Appeal Tribunal	215	130
Award increased by an Appeal Tribunal	9,550	6,290
Awards varied by an Appeal Tribunal	500	230
Awards on renewal claims which were lower than the award made on a previous claim	30,305	22,430
Awards on renewal claims which were higher than the award made on a previous claim	14,405	9,660
Awards on renewal claims which varied from the award made on a previous claim	37,605	21,740

[1] Figures for 2004 are for the calendar year (January to December), and those for 2005 are for the period from January 2005 to August 2005.

Notes:

1. The figures are taken from the Management Information System (MIS) computer system and are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. The figures are for new claims allowed or disallowed and do not reflect any changes to the outcome of those claims resulting from any subsequent supersession, revision or appeal.
3. "Supersessions" normally occur where there has been a change of circumstances since the date the award was made and a different decision is now appropriate.
4. "Revision" refers to the change of an award because it is accepted that the award was incorrect.
5. "Reduced" awards are those in which the rate of benefit payable is reduced, or the length of the award is reduced, or both on supersession, revision, appeal or following a renewal claim.
6. "Increased" awards are those in which the rate of benefit payable is increased on supersession, revision, appeal or following a renewal claim.
7. "Varied" awards are those in which either *(a)* entitlement to the care and mobility components of disability living allowance is changed on supersession, revision, appeal or following a renewal claim, but this does not result in any change to the amount of the allowance paid; or *(b)* entitlement is not changed on supersession, revision, appeal or following a renewal claim, but the period of the award is increased, or in the case of renewal claims, the award is for a longer period than the award made on a previous claim.
8. "Renewal claims" are new claims to disability living allowance made by people receiving the benefit when their existing award is coming to an end. These claims enable them to renew their entitlement to the benefit and, if they remain entitled, help ensure there is no break in payment.
9. Awards reduced, increased or varied by Appeal Tribunals include awards made on new claims, on supersession and on revision.

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions, Information Centre, 100 per cent. data.

Employment Rights

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance he has given to local authorities on the preparation of policies relating to employment rights of those who become disabled during the course of their employment. [18124]

Mrs. McGuire: In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, the Secretary of State approves a statutory code of practice prepared by the Disability Rights Commission to provide practical guidance on the employment provisions in Part 2 of the Act. Last year the Commission published a revised Code of Practice on Employment and Occupation to take account of the extended employment provisions which came into force on 1 October 2004. Chapter 2 of that code provides advice on the types of issues which all employers, including local authorities, should consider when developing anti-discrimination policies and practices.

Incapacity Benefit

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people, broken down by gender, who have made applications for incapacity benefit in the last year have had their applications refused as a result of an incomplete contributions history. [15006]

Mrs. McGuire: Between March 2004 and February 2005 around 330,145 incapacity benefit claims were 'disallowed at outset', due to failing the contribution conditions. Information by gender is not available.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the cost is of a domiciliary medical examination to assess claimants' eligibility for benefits; [15135]

(2) what criteria benefits claimants must fulfil to be granted a domiciliary medical examination to assess their eligibility for benefits; and what estimate he has made of the number of claimants who met this criteria in 2004–05; [15136]

(3) what provision Atos Origin has made in its budget for domiciliary medical examinations for benefits claimants. [15137]

Mrs. McGuire: Specific details of the cost of a domiciliary medical examination to assess claimants' eligibility for benefits and details of the provisions Atos Origin have made within its budget for domiciliary medical examinations are commercial in confidence and not disclosed.

Atos Origin will undertake a domiciliary visit under the following conditions:

when requested by the Department; or

where the claimant's GP has indicated that the claimant is unable to travel on health grounds; or

where the claimant has provided appropriate medical evidence which demonstrates he/she is unable to travel on health grounds; or

where the contractor chooses to undertake a domiciliary visit where it is considered appropriate to support the delivery of a high quality service.

In the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 the total number of domiciliary visits carried out for all benefit examinations was 129,425.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the monthly off-flow from incapacity benefits for each Jobcentre Plus district has been since January 2003, broken down by region. [18888]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested. The available information has been placed in the Library.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have *(a)* requested and *(b)* been granted a domiciliary medical examination to assess their eligibility for benefits in each of the last four years. [15724]

Mrs. McGuire: Atos Origin Medical Services do not hold any details of the number of domiciliary visits requested.

The total number of domiciliary medical examinations undertaken to assess claimants' eligibility for benefits is as follows:

As at 1 July to 30 June	*Number of domiciliary visits*
2004–05	129,425
2003–04	206,546
2002–03	240,506
2001–02	266,672

Marginal Deduction Rates

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is possible for *(a)* a benefit recipient and *(b)* a recipient of both tax credits benefits administered by his Department to have a marginal deduction rate of over 100 per cent. [18632]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Analysis underpinning the marginal deduction rates published in the DWP Tax Benefit Model Tables and also table 4.2 in recent Budget and pre-Budget reports reveal no meaningful cases where marginal deduction rates exceed 100 per cent.

Opinion Surveys

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* subject matter and *(b)* dates were of opinion survey research undertaken by the Department and its agencies in the last 12 months; if he will place copies of the results of each survey in the Library; which companies were used in conducting the research; and how much each was paid. [14814]

Mr. Plaskitt: The DWP conducts annual omnibus surveys to monitor public awareness of the Department and its responsibilities, and also public attitudes to the Government's welfare reform. Both pieces of research have been carried out during the last 12 months, the Omnibus Survey being conducted in January 2005 and Awareness Research taking place in March 2005. The cost for both pieces of work is £86,000. Mori conducted both surveys.

Data from both surveys has been placed in the Library.

Pension Credit

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the total *(a)* overpayment and *(b)* underpayment of pension credit; how many people have been affected; and what the average amount of over or under payment has been. [14905]

Mr. Timms: Latest estimates are available for pension credit overpayments for the first six months following the launch of pension credit in October 2003. Of the £2.46 billion pension credit paid between October 2003 and March 2004, approximately £150 million was overpaid and £47 million underpaid. On average over this period 511,000 incorrect awards were in payment at any one time, with approximately half of these due to customer error. Overpayments were an average of approximately £15 per week and underpayments were an average of approximately £11 per week.

The Department aims to recover overpayments of entitlement without causing undue hardship to the customer. If an overpayment has occurred there are a number of options the Department can take to recover the money—including inviting the customer to repay on a voluntary basis, deductions from current benefits and in cases of fraud, civil proceedings. Each case is decided having regard to the particular circumstances of the customer.

Notes:

1. These figures are based on a sample of the pension credit caseload between October 2003 and March 2004 and are subject to sampling error.

2. Overpayments and underpayments can be a result of official error, customer error or fraud.

3. The sample of 2,500 cases used to calculate these figures is a "snapshot" of the pension credit caseload and does not track the progress of an award. Estimates of the average amount that a pension credit customer has been overpaid or underpaid during the life of their award, or of the total number of cases affected in the six month period as a whole, are not available.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with the Pension Service on the use of pension credit payments under the Supporting People initiative to meet a proportion of service charges for pensioners living in sheltered accommodation. [21685]

Mr. Timms: Funding for the Supporting People Programme is provided for by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the devolved Administrations, through fixed grants to local authorities. The local authorities are responsible for planning, commissioning, inspecting, and funding services at the local level. Pension credit is a DWP benefit and does not fall under the Supporting People Programme.

The Supporting People scheme provides funding arrangements for housing-related support services that had previously been paid through income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance and, principally, housing benefit. Guidance to Pension Service decision-makers emphasises the importance of identifying types of service charges for which people are liable to ensure that provision is made through the correct channel.

Sickness Absence

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many days the Department has lost due to sickness in the past five years for which figures are available. [11476]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Table 1. Sickness absence information for DWP and the former DSS

Department	*Year*	*Average working days lost*
DSS	1999	10.9
DSS	2000	11.0
DWP	2001	11.1
DWP	2002	10.8
DWP	2003	11.6

The Department for Work and Pensions was created in June 2001. Due to migration of businesses into, and out of the newly forming Department, and differences in calculation methods, figures for the Department as a whole are only available from 2001. Information provided before this date relates to the former Department for Social Security (DSS), the main predecessor Department in place prior to the formation of DWP.

The DWP is committed to reducing its levels of sick absence. The Department's managing attendance policy was subject to a recent review by the National Audit Office. Recommendations from the NAO report have been put in place, including a re- launch of the policy.

Special Advisers

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list *(a)* the special advisers in his Department, *(b)* their specific areas of expertise and *(c)* the total cost of employing them in the latest year for which figures are available. [8822]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 162WS.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received winter fuel payments in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK since their inception. [21054]

Mr. Timms: Information relating to the 1997–98 and 1998–99 winters is not available. The information from winter 1999–2000 is in the table. These figures are also available in the Library. Information on payments made in Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Constituency/region	*Payments made*
Jarrow	
1999–2000	15,980
2000–01	17,335
2001–02	17,315
2002–03	17,335
2003–04	17,390
2004–05	16,895
South Tyneside	
1999–2000	30,135
2000–01	32,840
2001–02	32,735
2002–03	32,650
2003–04	32,595
2004–05	31,575
North East	
1999–2000	461,685
2000–01	511,875
2001–02	513,455
2002–03	516,755
2003–04	519,045
2004–05	509,225
Great Britain	
1999–2000	10,084,130
2000–01	11,105,745
2001–02	11,201,895
2002–03	11,348,040
2003–04	11,468,235
2004–05	11,401,170

Notes:
1. Data is taken at the specified dates.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
4. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. Sample.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated total annual cost of all public sector pension schemes is for each year from 1988–89 to 2008–09; and if he will make a statement. [20684]

Mr. Des Browne: I have been asked to reply.

Figures for Government spending on unfunded public service pensions that are included within Annually Managed Expenditure are published in table B.1 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005 (PESA). That table covers 1999–00 to 2007–08; a comparable table for earlier years is not available. The PESA table includes payments in respect of transfers of liabilities within central Government as well as payments to pensioners. It does not include unfunded police and firefighter pensions paid by local authorities, which are included within line D.623 of Table 5.3.4S of the United Kingdom National Accounts—the "Blue Book"—2005. Figures for spending on Local Government Pension Scheme benefits in England and Wales are available at:

www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/data/table1.pdf

Real terms figures can be calculated using GDP deflators found on HM Treasury's website:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/gdp_deflators/data_gdp_index.cfm

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

ACP Countries

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to enable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to have the option of signing either an Economic Partnership Agreement or a pro-development alternative. [21146]

Ian Pearson: The European Union is negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with six regional groups of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, with negotiations due to finish by the end of 2007. The UK published a position paper on EPAs in March.

In the Cotonou Agreement, the European Union made a commitment to provide an alternative to an Economic Partnership Agreement at the request of any ACP country. The deadline to request an alternative has been extended to the end of 2006, at the request of the ACP themselves. To date no ACP countries have requested an alternative or have disengaged from the ongoing EPA negotiations. Should any ACP request an alternative to an EPA, the Government will encourage the Commission to consider all the possible alternative options available. The Government have already commissioned research on the amendments that would be required to existing trade arrangements to offer a sufficient alternative.

Auditor Liability

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the provisions relating to auditor liability in the European Commission's Eighth Directive. [19628]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government support the provisions set out in Article 30a of the Audit Directive, which received political agreement under the UK Presidency on 11 October. Article 30a commits the European Commission to undertake research to assess the impact of the different national regimes for auditor liability across the EU.

Bain Report

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects Sir George Bain's report on his findings on the Royal Mail will be published. [21675]

Barry Gardiner: Sir George Bain has been appointed to provide advice to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on Royal Mail issues. There are no plans to publish Sir George's advice.

Developing Countries

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage companies based in England to act responsibly in respect of *(a)* human rights and *(b)* the environment in their operations in developing countries. [19825]

Ian Pearson: We actively encourage UK-based international companies which operate in other countries, to apply high standards of corporate behaviour, including adhering to relevant internationally agreed standards which respect human rights and the environment.

In April 2005 the UN High Commission on Human Rights requested the UN Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to take forward work on the area of business and human rights. The two year mandate of the special representative includes identification and clarification of standards of corporate responsibility and accountability for business with regard to human rights.

The UK plays a leading role in ensuring that the international framework to promote and to tackle abuses of workers rights throughout the world is in place, particularly through its work with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). We play an active role in the ILO Committee on Multinational Enterprises and support the promotion and follow-up of the ILO Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy which seeks to enhance the positive social and labour effects of multinational corporations' operations throughout the world.

We actively support the UN Global Compact, launched by Kofi Anann in July 2000. The Compact is an agreement between the UN and business to uphold and promulgate 10 principles covering human rights, labour, the environment and corruption. We also promote the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which recommend standards of responsible business conduct for businesses operating in or from the 37 adhering countries and we have written to the FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of these expectations.

We have set out our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice internationally in our International Strategic Framework on Corporate Social Responsibility published in March this year.

The Government are building Sustainable Development Dialogues with China, India, Brazil and other emerging economies. These dialogues seek to engage companies and civil society in both countries in the move towards sustainable development. The UK-India Dialogue was launched on 11 October.

Employee Shares

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have issued shares *(a)* directly to their employees and *(b)* to an employee benefit trust in each year since 1997. [21666]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

Employers can give shares to their employees in a variety of different ways, including both taxed and tax-advantaged employee share schemes. These are reported to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). We do not know precisely how many companies have issued shares to UK employees in any year since 1997. This is because there are different reporting regimes for each type of tax-advantaged share scheme, plus taxed employment-related securities.

Published National Statistics show 6,427 companies were operating one or more tax-advantaged employee share or share option scheme in 2003–04. Of which, at least 1,045 operated a scheme that was open to all-employees. Other data show that in 2003–04 around 5,000 companies reported appropriations of employment-related securities subject to tax and national insurance. Many operate taxed and tax-advantaged arrangements simultaneously. For each tax-advantaged scheme, the following table contains either the total number of companies, or schemes operated by companies, where employees have been issued shares, or were granted or exercised share options:

	Number of schemes[1]			*Number of companies*	
	Approved profit sharing	*Save As You Earn*[2]	*Company Share option plan*[2]	*Share incentive plan*	*Enterprise management incentives*[2]
1997–98	369	701	529	—	—
	—	(589)	(695)	—	—
1998–99	375	683	510	—	—
	—	(588)	(727)	—	—
1999–2000	364	686	708	—	—
	—	(544)	(844)	—	—

	Number of schemes[1]			Number of companies	
	Approved profit sharing	*Save As You Earn*[2]	*Company Share option plan*[2]	*Share incentive plan*	*Enterprise management incentives*[2]
2000–01	351	387	728	48	11
	—	(493)	(1,058)	—	(855)
2001–02	255	604	711	196	113
	—	(461)	(874)	—	(1,914)
2002–03	144	510	819	339	274
	—	(446)	(1,033)	—	(1,945)
2003–04	—	500	815	471	363
	—	(366)	(816)	—	(2,027)

[1] Companies may operate more than one scheme of the same type simultaneously.
[2] Share option schemes: Options granted are in parentheses as employees only acquire shares when they exercise options.

Energy Costs

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he is taking to ensure that British companies are not adversely affected by higher energy costs than their European competitors. [20525]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* At the beginning of 2005 the Department set up the Gas Prices Working Group with the Energy Intensive Users Group and Ofgem to develop ideas for mitigating the impact of rising prices on industrial users. The group has agreed an Action List of short and medium-term measures, such as maximising gas supplies, improving the functioning of the gas market, encouraging demand side response and pursuing energy market liberalisation in the EU. We have made the latter a priority of our Presidency and I will be impressing on my colleagues in other member states at the Energy Council on 1 December the importance of full implementation of the EU Liberalisation package.

Export Controls

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many licences were issued under export control regulations in connection with the Defence Systems and Equipment International Exhibition in September, broken down by type. [19508]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government issued five Open Individual Trade Control Licences (OITCLs) in connection with the Defence Systems Equipment International Exhibition (DSEi) held in September 2005.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what UK companies have sought licences for the export of machines or parts to be used in the construction of a security barrier by Israel; and if he will set out the terms of any licences granted; [18594]

(2) which UK companies have *(a)* sought and *(b)* been granted export licences for the export of equipment to be used in the construction of the security barrier by Israel. [20306]

Malcolm Wicks: Export licence applications are made to the Government in confidence and information on whether any UK company has applied for any such licence, and if so which, is therefore exempt from disclosure. I would make clear however, that construction machines or parts are not generally controlled under the UK's strategic export control regime unless they are military goods listed on the UK's Military List.

I would also make clear that all applications to export strategic goods from the UK are carefully considered on a case by case basis against the consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, taking into account the circumstances prevailing at the time and other previously announced Government policies. These criteria make specific reference, for example, to

> "the internal situation in the country of final destination, as a function of the existence of tensions or armed conflicts" (criterion 3),
>
> And
>
> "preservation of regional peace and stability" (criterion 4).

Every export licence application is considered against each of the criteria; should it be judged that an export would contravene any of the criteria, for example risk of the goods being used for internal repression in the Occupied Territories, the application would be refused.

The Government publishes detailed information on its export licensing decisions, by destination, in our Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls, which are available from the Libraries of the House and the DTI Export Control Organisation website (www.dti.gov.uk/export.control).

Football Broadcasting

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has had since May with representatives from other EU governments on football television broadcasting rights. [20278]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has had no such discussions with other EU member states.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his assessment is of the impact on employment levels in the small shops sector of *(a)* the introduction of and *(b)* subsequent increases in the minimum wage. [20878]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTI does not have the precise data on employment in the small shops sector.

In the last quarter before the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999, employment in the retail sector in Great Britain was estimated to be

2.525 million. Employment has since grown by over 11 per cent. to 2.823 million in the second quarter of 2005.

The DTI has based these estimates on the Office for National Statistics Employer Surveys.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in Norfolk have been paid at the level of the national minimum wage since its introduction. [20963]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Reliable figures cannot be produced for Norfolk due to small sample size.

The DTI estimates that around 80,000 people in the East of England region stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI has estimated that 100,000 people in the East of England region will be covered by the October 2005 uprating of the national minimum wage. The DTI has based the October 1999 estimate on the Office for National Statistics central estimate of low pay; the 2005 estimate is based on data from the 2004 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

National Grid

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultation has occurred with *(a)* the general public and *(b)* industry about the reduction in voltage on the national grid that may be required in the event of a one in 50 cold winter. [18267]

Malcolm Wicks: My officials are investigating the impacts of voltage reduction measures undertaken in other countries in the past year. We will share the findings with industry and other interested parties.

Newspapers and Magazines

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will review the local wholesaling arrangements by publishers for the supply and distribution of newspapers and magazines. [20886]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* None. Following a request from members of the publishing industry, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is considering the compatibility with competition law of distribution arrangements for newspapers and magazines, including the issue of wholesalers being allocated exclusive geographical distribution territories. The OFT published a provisional opinion on this matter on 19 May 2005 and has since received further representations from across the newspaper and magazine supply chain. The new chief executive of the OFT, John Fingleton, is taking a fresh look at the opinion.

Nuclear Power

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the nuclear installations in the United Kingdom where nuclear materials accounting operates on a near real time basis. [18271]

Malcolm Wicks: Nuclear materials accountancy is used at UK nuclear sites to help meet statutory domestic regulations and international safeguards requirements. International safeguards requirements include the timely detection of diversion of civil nuclear material. This timeliness is a function of material type and form. Some nuclear installations therefore operate "near real time materials accountancy" to meet this safeguards requirement. Such accountancy systems are not designed for process control and are distinct from systems for monitoring the safety and security at the installation. Parts of the Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP) and THORP reprocessing plant at Sellafield operate "near real time materials accountancy".

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to develop new nuclear power plants in the UK. [19801]

Malcolm Wicks: None. The Government have stated that before any decision to proceed with the building of new nuclear power stations, there would need to be the fullest public consultation and the publication of a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to publish a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals on whether to build new nuclear power stations. [17773]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced that the Government would bring forward proposals on energy policy next year. The analysis of options will include an assessment of civil nuclear power.

The Government have stated that before any decision to proceed with the building of new nuclear power stations, there would need to be the fullest public consultation and the publication of a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what account has been taken of projected rises in sea levels due to global warming in the siting of new power stations; [18125]

(2) what guidance he has issued in respect of siting of new power stations. [18158]

Malcolm Wicks: I have issued no guidance. Location is a matter for the developer to consider and substantiate in putting forward his application. That application will be considered against the environmental implications of the location chosen.

Post Office Ltd.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many mobile post offices are operating in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the North Down constituency. [20640]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). The chief executive, David Mills, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the Office of Fair Trading to rule on the suitability and fairness of the standard contract offered by Post Office Ltd. to members of the Association of Convenience Stores; and if he will make a statement. [20887]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* This is a matter for the OFT. I understand OFT is currently still in the process of consulting interested parties.

Power Cuts

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the possible implications for the operation of medical equipment of a cut in mains voltage during a one in 50 cold winter. [18492]

Malcolm Wicks: Medical equipment is designed to operate at the standard supply voltage and within the statutory limit for the UK of plus 10 per cent. minus 6 per cent.

In NHS hospitals, where the supply voltage falls to a value likely to give rise to danger or equipment failure, then automatic systems disconnect the network supply and revert to a stand-by generator supply until the network is restored to a sustained normal value.

Property Searches

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to implement *(a)* the method of determination and *(b)* the level of charging by local authorities for property searches in response to the conclusions of the Office of Fair Trading report into property searches published in September. [21285]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are considering the recommendations made by the Office of Fair Trading in their market study on property searches. We welcome the publication of this report and are discussing the recommendation with stakeholders. The response will be published within 90 days of the publication date of the report.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what volumes of *(a)* low-level, *(b)* intermediate and *(c)* high-level radioactive waste are stored in the United Kingdom. [19731]

Mr. Morley: I have been ask to reply

The UK Radioactive Waste Inventory, which is jointly prepared by DEFRA and Nirex, details the volumes of waste in store in the UK as at 1 April 2001 as:

	Cubic metres
Higher Level Waste (HLW)	764
Intermediate Level Waste (ILW)	74,466
Low Level Waste (LLW)	15,674

This is on the basis that the volumes quoted represent the waste in final conditioned form.

Conditioned radioactive waste is immobilised in a solid and stable form that reduces the hazard for long-term management.

Details of the volumes held as at 1 April 2004 will be published later this year as the 2004 UK Radioactive Waste Inventory.

Renewable Energy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department is funding in respect of transforming biomass into hydrogen. [17181]

Malcolm Wicks: Biomass to hydrogen has been identified as one of six hydrogen energy chains, which could offer cost-competitive CO_2 reductions and increased energy security for the UK by 2030. Further details are in the Strategic Framework for Hydrogen Energy in the UK (http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen_framework_full.pdf). My Department is currently developing a £15 million demonstration programme for hydrogen and fuel cells and we are committed to establishing a Hydrogen Coordination Unit.

A £312,000 grant has recently been offered to the PERA Group to support a £596,000 project to develop a process for the production of hydrogen from biomass and wastes using supercritical water gasification.

Prior to this, the DTI commissioned a study from Imperial College to assess the options for the production of transport fuels from renewable sources. This study included hydrogen production from biomass. The final report from this work is available on the DTI website (http://www.dti.gov.uk) URN 03/982.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent *(a)* within the EU and *(b)* within the UK on (i) nuclear fusion and fission research and (ii) renewable energy research in each year from 1980 to date. [17182]

Malcolm Wicks: It has not been possible to collate all public expenditure and other Government support since 1980 for energy technologies in the time available at proportionate cost. However it is possible to detail direct DTI and Research Council expenditure on new and renewables, clean fossil fuels and nuclear for the years 1990 onwards. These are set out in the following tables.

In addition to this both DEFRA and the Scottish Executive provide funding to the Carbon Trust which conducts research into low carbon energy activities among other activities. DEFRA also funds research into combined heat and power, which is also detailed in the following tables.

For figures relating to the rest of the EU, I would refer you to the EEA renewables 2005 for the latest details and can be found at, http://www.iea.org.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1990–91

Rounded to nearest £000

	Spend							
Programme area	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*
Bio Wastes	874,000	1,237,000	1,158,000	916,000	1,235,000	1,097,000	593,000	75,000
Biomass	973,000	1,153,000	1,961,000	2,378,000	2,350,000	2,313,000	1,937,000	1,317,000
Embedded Generation	0	54,000	108,000	463,000	908,000	835000	647,000	586,000
Fuel cells	155,000	339,000	362,000	827,000	915,000	1,172,000	914,000	900,000
Geothermal—Aquifers	-8,000	55,000	130,000	143000	0	0	0	0
Geothermal—Hot Dry Rocks	2,579,000	1,567,000	1,088,000	989,000	245,000	0	0	0
Hydro	33,000	122,000	70,000	167,000	148,000	79,000	142,000	57,000
Solar	2,124,000	2,354,000	2,302,000	2,378,000	2,067,000	1,878,000	1,874,000	1,660,000
Tidal	1,860,000	1,932,000	1,726,000	582,000	220,000	165,000	0	0
Wave	388,000	467,000	325,000	196,000	106,000	42,000	50,000	0
Wind	4,530,000	6,674,000	8,694,000	7,310,000	2,729,000	3,370,000	2,365,000	1,240,000
Grand total	13,500,000	15,954,000	17,924,000	16,349,000	10,923,000	10,951,000	8,522,000	5,835,000

	Spend							
	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Bio Wastes	48,000	25,000	56,000	13,000	42,000	259,000	—	7,628,000
Biomass	1,076,000	1,585,000	1,267,000	1,333,000	1,595,000	1,346,000	974,222	23,558,222
Embedded Generation	530,000	596,000	589,000	776,000	1,424,000	725,000	1,105,640	9,346,640
Fuel cells	1,197,000	1,168,000	1,410,000	1,249,000	1,200,000	1,701,000	4,907,430	18,416,430
Geothermal—Aquifers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	320,000
Geothermal—Hot Dry Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,468,000
Hydro	80,000	138,000	60,000	130,000	200,000	85,000	0	1,511,000
Solar	983,000	1,278,000	1,264,000	1,522,000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340	31,270,340
Tidal	0	0	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530	12,995,530
Wave	91,000	11,000	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000	—	5521,000
Wind	950,000	801,000	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600	45,106,600
Grand total	4,955,000	5,602,000	5,917,000	7,238,000	13,118,000	13,660,000	11,685,762	162,133,762

Notes:

1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI.
2. For 2004–05, highlighted cells show a combined spend for the two areas
3. It has not been possible to collate expenditure on oil and gas research in the time available

DTI clean coal programme

	£
1990–91	10,199,000
1991–92	4,108,000
1992–93	3,020,000
1993–94	6,918,000
1994–95	6,876,000
1995–96	6,626,000
1996–97	5,195,000
1997–98	3,100 000
1998–99	2,900,000
1999–2000	2,500,000
2000–01	4,300,000
2001–02	4,400,000
2002–03	3,00,000
2003–04	5,000,000
2004–05	[1]6,500,000
Total	68,142,000

[1] Estimate

Figures for direct Government expenditure (but not including spending by the Research Councils) on nuclear fission:

Nuclear

	£
1991–92	73,500,000
1992–93	69,200,000
1993–94	60,900,000
1994–95	12,500,000
1995–96	6,000,000
1996–97	9,300,000
1997–98	1,000,000
1998–99	1,600,000
1999–2000	2,500,000
2000–01	0
2001–02	2,000,000

Nuclear

	£
2002–03	2,100,000
2003–04	2,100,000
2004–05	2,200,000
Total	244,900,000

DTI capital grant programmes

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Biomass (DTI and Lottery spend)	—	10,000	1,913,000	1,923,000
Offshore Wind Capital Grants	—	0	15,000,000	15,000,000
Clear Skies Community Renewables	200,000	1,387,000	2,413,000	3,800,000
Major PV Demo Programme	960,000	2,880,000	6,450,000	9,330,000
Grand total	1,160,000	4,277,000	25,776,000	30,053,000

DEFRA CHP programme

	£
1990–91	300,000
1991–92	300,000
1992–93	300,000
1993–94	400,000
1994–95	500,000
1995–96	500,000
1996–97	700,000
1997–98	1,000,000
1998–99	1,300,000
1999–2000	1,900,000
2000–01	2,500,000

DEFRA CHP programme

	£
2001–02	2,800,000
2002–03	1,600,000
2003–04	2,500,000
2004–05	2,000,000
Total	18,600,000

Note: Several indirect measures of state support for CHP were introduced in 2001–02. Of those that can be enumerated, climate change levy exemption on fuel inputs to Good Quality CHP and good quality CHP electricity outputs were valued at up to £80 million per annum, while eligibility for Enhanced Capital Allowances is worth in the region of £10 million per annum to the industry. Capital grants for Community Energy programme schemes were introduced in 2002–03 and the spend on schemes including CHP was: £427,000 in 2002–03, £4,315,000 in 2003–04 and £4,896,000 in 2004–05.

Research Council spend

Programme area	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Biofuel	0	0	0	21,540	51,545
Biomass	446,665	870,970	736,434	600,811	700,790
CHP	4,382	36,297	63,210	77,166	267,313
CO_2 sequestration	0	0	0	22,544	41,589
Fuel cells	887,584	1,011,524	703,128	898,637	1,145,076
Hydrogen	30,348	135,531	59,169	82,976	318,500
Solar	1,439,835	1,286,000	1,076,000	1,134,000	1,130,000
Photovoltaic	2,254,756	3,001,835	2,759,517	2,991,977	3,536,428
Wave and tidal	0	157,000	175,000	300,599	605,693
Wind	199,847	225,903	177,716	260,596	330,283
Wind/solar[1]	0	21,000	21,000	100,000	0
Wind/wave[2]	0	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000
Waste	66,012	9,985	39,652	39,962	95,718
Geothermal	0	0	0	40,493	64,550
Storage	325,808	649,899	669,617	837,918	888,602
Networks	1,347,678	1,167,695	1,081,132	919,165	1,114,793
Total renewable	7,002,915	8,601,639	7,589,576	8,356,384	10,318,881
Conventional	331,072	103,266	107,890	549,220	1,120,493
Fission power	42,111	81,228	61,793	127,562	324,879
Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Innovation	1,732,072	1,854,776	1,693,629	1,400,400	1,671,465
Other and General	0	13,000	303,000	670,000	602,000
Fusion	16,600,000	12,600,000	14,300,000	17,000,000	14,400,000
Total	25,708,169	23,253,909	24,055,888	28,103,566	28,437,717

Programme area	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Biofuel	143,990	134,929	92,325	444,329
Biomass	783,026	1,042,526	1,186,257	6,367,479
CHP	356,756	225,905	70,791	1,101,820
CO_2 sequestration	77,787	30,323	42,461	214,704
Fuel cells	1,468,042	1,193,165	917,608	8,224,764
Hydrogen	516,560	1,494,155	1,495,130	4,132,369
Solar	1,157,000	1,453,023	1,753,334	10,429,192
Photovoltaic	2,770,354	2,381,044	2,761,866	22,457,777
Wave and tidal	616,694	830,226	1,050,253	3,735,465
Wind	490,447	481,572	255,672	2,422,036
Wind/solar[1]	0	0	0	142,000
Wind/wave[2]	28,000	28,000	28,000	196,000
Waste	124,826	169,024	154,474	699,653
Geothermal	63,550	73,460	79,429	321,482
Storage	809,871	730,182	499,536	5,411,433
Networks	1,388,490	1,804,749	2,463,125	11,286,827
Total renewable	10,795,392	12,072,282	12,850,259	—
Conventional	1,349,380	1,252,582	1,627,554	6,441,457
Fission power	307,195	212,239	125,453	1,282,460
Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Innovation	1,979,554	1,211,881	2,914,276	14,458,053
Other and General	665,000	762,000	1,944,000	4,959,000
Fusion	14,600,000	15,630,000	19,530,000	124,660,000
Total	29,696,521	31,140,985	38,991,541	—

Note:
Prior to 1997 data on Research Council expenditure was not collated in a way which is comparable to post 1997 expenditure.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department spent on research into renewable energy technologies in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* each of the previous five years. [17902]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI spend on renewable technologies for the six years from 1999–2000 to 2004–05 is set out in the following table.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1990–91

rounded to nearest £000 *Programme area*	*Spend 1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Bio wastes	25,000	56,000	13,000	42,000	259,000		395,000
Biomass	1,585,000	1,267,000	1,333,000	1,595,000	1,346,000	974,222	8,100,222

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1990–91

rounded to nearest £000

Programme area	*Spend 1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Embedded generation	596,000	589,000	776,000	1,424,000	725,000	1,105,640	5,215,640
Fuel cells	1,168,000	1,410,000	1,249,000	1,200,000	1,701,000	4,907,430	11,635,430
Geothermal—aquifers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Geothermal—hot dry rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hydro	138,000	60,000	130,000	200,000	85,000	0	613,000
Solar	127,8000	126,4000	152,2000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340	13,650,340
Tidal	0	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530	6,510,530
Wave	11,000	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000		3,856,000
Wind	801,000	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600	7,244,600
Total	5,602,000	5,917,000	7,238,000	13,118,000	13,660,000	11,685,762	57,220,762

Notes:

1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI.
2. For 2004–05, highlighted cells show a combined spend for the two areas.
3. It has not been possible to collate expenditure on oil and gas research in the time available.

£

DTI capital grant programmes	*2002–03*	*2003–4*	*2004–5*	*Total*
Biomass (DTI and lottery spend)	—	10,000	1,913,000	1,923,000
Offshore wind capital grants	—	0	15,000,000	15,000,000
Clear skies community renewables	200,000	1,387,000	2,413,000	3,800,000
Major PV demo programme	960,000	2,880,000	6,450,000	9,330,000
Total	1,160,000	4,277,000	25,776,000	30,053,000

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to extend the current programme of funding for the renewable energy industry for another 12 months. [19541]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's main support mechanism for renewables is the Renewables Obligation (RO), which was introduced in April 2002. It is a market-based mechanism, designed primarily to support technologies that are close to the market and it will remain in place until 2027. Electricity supply companies are required to source an increasing percentage of their electricity sales from eligible renewable sources. The obligation for 2005–06 is 5.5 per cent. rising to 15.4 per cent. by 2015. The Government have also allocated around £500 million of support for research, development and demonstration into renewable technologies between 2002–08.

There are a range of specific programmes which are currently running which will continue into next year including:

the EPSRC-led ongoing energy research programme which supports academic research into energy technologies including renewables.

Industry-led collaborative R and D delivered through the Technology Programme. Renewable technologies have featured in all calls since the programme's inception, though technologies supported in each call are prioritised by the independent Technology Strategy Board. The programme will support a range of projects in renewables in 2006.

Expenditure on bioenergy and offshore wind capital grants programmes will continue in 2006.

The DTI is currently developing a £50 million marine deployment fund which is expected to be operational by 2006.

The DTI has extended the Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme (PV MDP) with £31 million worth of capital grants available from 2002 to 2006. Continued support for PV will be directed through the low carbon buildings programme due to be implemented in financial year 2006–07. The programme is currently under development after consultation.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent on the testing of wave and tidal technology projects in each of the last five years. [19543]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Details of spend on wave and tidal technology projects for each of the last five years are set out in the tables.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for wave and tidal technology by financial year from 2000–01 to2004–05[1]

	Amount (£)
2000–01	358,000
2001–02	967,000
2002–03	2,744,000
2003–04	[2]6,218,000
2004–05	1,268,530

[1] Rounded to the nearest £000.

[2] Includes £1.2 million grant to the European Marine Energy Centre, Orkney.

Research Council spend—external spend for wave and tidal technology by financial year from 2000–01 to 2004–05[1]

	Amount (£)
2000–01	300,599
2001–02	605,693
2002–03	616,694
2003–04	830,226
2004–05	1,050,253

[1] Rounded to the nearest £000.

Note:

The figures do not include support for wave and tidal technology research and development and demonstration provided through the devolved Administrations, Carbon Trust or Regional Development Agency initiatives.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage the use of solar power. [19593]

Malcolm Wicks: Support for the development of PV ranges from encouraging innovation in research and development to stimulating the market for PV systems.

This is being achieved through:

Collaborative research and development (R&D) programme of approximately £2.5 million per annum; last year the DTI allocated just over £2.7 million.

£10 million already committed through Domestic and Large Scale Field Trials for a diverse set of PV installations from homes to offices.

Extended Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme (PV MDP) with £31 million worth of capital grants available from 2002 to 2006. Continued support for PV will be directed through the low carbon buildings programme due to be implemented in financial year 2006–07. The programme is currently under development after consultation.

Ministerial initiatives to encourage UK and foreign companies to invest in PV cell, module and system component manufacture in the UK, resulting in Romag and Sharp announcements in October 2003, and launch of integrated products such as the Marley Solar Tile and Solar Century's C21 PV roof tile.

Addressing planning, installer accreditation, network connection and metering issues through the work of various government-industry groups.

Work with the IEA and the UK currently leads on Task 9 "Photovoltaic Services for Developing Countries".

The DTI funded Clear Skies Programme provides grants for householders and community/not-for-profit organisations for the installation of solar hot water heating systems, www.clear-skies.org. This programme was extended to run until March 2006 and will also be superseded by the new low carbon buildings programme.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the *(a)* grants and *(b)* amounts available for the installation of domestic (i) solar-thermal panels, (ii) photovoltaics, (iii) wind micro-generators and (iv) other small-scale greenhouse gas emission-saving devices; and what grants have been available in each of the past five years. [19741]

Malcolm Wicks: For the installation of domestic scale photovoltaics, grants have been available since 2002 under the DTI's Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme, for up to 50 per cent. of installation costs up to a maximum installation of 5kw. www.solarpvgrants.co.uk. The following caps for cost per kWp installed were introduced during the programme:

	KWp (£)
From June 2003:	
Bolt-on	3,000
Integrated	4,250
From 19 July 2004:	
Bolt-on	2,800
Integrated	4,000
Semi-integrated	3,400
Glass/glass	5,000
From 1 March 2005:	
Bolt-on	2,500
Integrated	3,500
Semi-integrated	3,000
Glass/glass	5,000

The DTI has £10 million already committed through Domestic and Large Scale Field Trials for a diverse set of PV installations from homes to offices.

Under the DTI's Clear Skies programme, which was launched in January 2003 the following grants have been available for domestic installations:

Solar water heating—£400 regardless of size. This was reduced from £500 in July 2004.

Wind—£1,000 per kw installed up to a maximum of £5,000.

Hydro—£1,000 per kw installed up to a maximum of £5,000.

Ground source Heat Pumps—£1,200 regardless of size.

Room heaters/stoves with automated wood pellet feed—£600 regardless of size.

Wood fuelled boiler systems—£1,500 regardless of size.

www.clear-skies.org

No domestic grants were available in the last five years prior to these programmes.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research he has evaluated on the use of wave technology for energy generation; and if he will make a statement. [20361]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI supports research into the use of wave technology for energy generation under its Technology Programme www.dti.gov.uk/technology programme.

The most recent call for proposals under the Technology Programme was in April 2005 when a total of eight proposals for wave technology research were received and evaluated. Wave technology will also be a priority area in the next call of the Technology Programme.

Pre-commercial multi-device demonstrations will also be supported under the £50 million Marine Renewables Deployment Fund.

Wave technology is also covered through Carbon Trust programmes, such as the Marine Energy Challenge and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's Supergen Marine Consortium.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected maximum practicable percentage contribution is to United Kingdom's energy needs that can be provided by wind farms. [16413]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK has among the very best wind resources in Europe. Our view is that wind, both onshore and offshore, could easily contribute more that 10 per cent. of our electricity needs. Work undertaken by NGC indicates that 10 per cent. wind could be accommodated on the UK's transmission system with little additional cost or difficulty. Beyond that, NGC's work also indicates that 20 per cent. wind could be manageable. A view that is reinforced by experience in Denmark where wind already contributes more than 20 per cent. of electricity generation.

However, our renewable policies remain technology neutral. Our aspiration is to supply 20 per cent. of electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020. By that time we would expect other renewable technologies,

such as biomass and wave and tidal, to come to the fore particularly as the balancing and wider system costs associated with wind are likely to increase as connected wind generation is increased.

Rosewall Sculpture

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will make a statement on Royal Mail's planned auction of the Rosewall Sculpture; [21126]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Chairman of the Royal Mail Group, plc. regarding the auction of the Rosewall Sculpture; [21127]

(3) if he will take steps to prevent Royal Mail's sale of the Rosewall Sculpture and its permanent departure from Chesterfield. [21937]

Barry Gardiner: There have not been any discussions with the chairman of the Royal Mail Group on this matter.

Royal Mail has recently withdrawn the sculpture from the planned auction. The company is currently reviewing the future of the piece and are hopeful of finding a satisfactory solution.

Severn Estuary (Tidal Barrage)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans his Department has to review the viability of a tidal barrage on the Severn Estuary; and if he will make a statement. [20387]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has no plans to review the viability of a tidal barrage on the Severn Estuary at this time.

Small Shops

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of small shops in England which *(a)* are and *(b)* will in 2015 be run by (i) major retailing chains and (ii) independent owners. [20885]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* There are 184,695 VAT-registered retail businesses in the UK, operating 278,630 retail outlets. The Department does not hold data on the ownership status of these companies.

The Department has not made projections regarding the composition of the retail sector up to 2015.

TREASURY

Child Benefit

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have benefited from child benefit in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [21044]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures below the level of Great Britain are not available for periods prior to August 1999.

Figures for August 1999 to August 2004 are available on the Office for National Statistics Neighbourhood Statistics website under the people and society heading, http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/download1.do

Child Poverty

Ed Balls: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what funding has been allocated to measures to tackle child poverty for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* future financial years; and if he will make a statement. [17013]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 13 October 2005]:* The Government are committed to halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020. Our measures for tackling child poverty for current and future generations cover not just financial support measures, but also measures to deliver employment opportunity for all, and improve children's life chances and break cycles of deprivation. Therefore it is not possible to provide a precise figure for the funding allocated in 2005–06 and future years, as the full range of public services must contribute to tackling child poverty. Details of this approach are available in the Child Poverty Review and the 2004 Spending Review White Paper (Cm 6237).

The Government have made a strong start to tackling child poverty. In relative low income terms this Government have already lifted more than half a million children out of poverty. Tax credits are a key element in the Government's strategy to tackle child poverty and provide financial support for families, and are benefiting 6 million families and 10 million children. In 2005–06 the child tax credit and child benefit provide up to £59 per week for the first child and up to £44 for each additional child, and the Government have committed to increasing the child element of CTC in line with earnings up to and including 2007–08.

Debt Relief

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the details of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) aspects of the G8 debt proposal to be finalised; if he will list those countries which may be eligible to benefit by having all their IMF debts up to 31 December 2004 irrevocably cancelled; when he expects they will receive this cancellation; and from which IMF funding streams this cancellation is to be paid for each of the countries concerned. [20526]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At the meeting of the International Monetary and Financial Committee on 24 September, it was agreed that the managing director of the IMF would call the executive board together to complete its approval of the arrangements to deliver debt relief by the end of 2005.

Eligible countries will be the HIPCs, as they reach completion point. For those countries who have already reached completion point we expect the same standards required for completion point to have been maintained, so that we can sure that countries will use the savings from debt relief in a poverty-reducing manner.

A list of the HIPCs and the progress they have made in the HIPC initiative follows:

Countries at completion point

Benin
Bolivia
Burkina Faso
Ethiopia
Guyana
Ghana
Honduras
Mali
Mauritania
Madagascar
Mozambique
Nicaragua
Niger
Rwanda
Senegal
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Total—18

Countries between decision and completion points

Burundi
Cameroon
Chad
Democratic Rep. Congo
Gambia
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Malawi
Sierra Leone
Sao Tome and Principe
Total—10

Countries not yet at decision point

Burma
Central African Rep.
Comoros
Rep. of Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Lao PDR
Liberia
Somalia
Sudan
Togo
Total—10

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* policies and *(b)* measures of governance are required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank of the Completion Point Heavily Indebted Poor Countries to enable them to benefit from further IMF debt cancellation; and if he will make a statement. [20527]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Countries will qualify for debt stock cancellation by reaching Completion Point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). By definition, Completion Point HIPCs have demonstrated a sustained commitment to poverty reduction and sound macroeconomic management that provides confidence that the savings from debt relief will be used for poverty reduction. Good governance is part of this, with standards drawn from national strategies. Once countries have qualified for debt stock cancellation, they will get 100 per cent. irrevocable relief. There will be no on-going conditionality.

Countries that have already completed the HIPC Initiative must demonstrate that they have maintained their commitment to poverty reduction and good macro-economic management in order to qualify for relief. They must therefore have remained current with their repayment obligations to the International Financial Institutions, and not have experienced serious lapses, including in governance, such that their IMF programmes would be at risk.

In addition, extra donor resources will be provided to the World Bank and African Development Bank to fully compensate for the costs of the debt stock cancellation. These resources will be allocated to all poor countries through the Institutions' existing Performance Based Allocation System, thereby providing a strong incentive for good policy (including governance) and performance. World Bank and IMF staff will also continue to monitor and report on the overall efficiency of public expenditure as well as on progress in reducing corruption and enhancing transparency in recipient countries.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [20995]

John Healey: HM Treasury includes the use of verbal and numerical reasoning tests as part of the selection process for new recruits, in order to assess the applicants' literacy and numeracy skills. The complexity of the roles being recruited to determines the level of difficulty of the test used. The information obtained from such tests together with other selection methods, is used to determine the applicants' suitability for the role.

When using psychometric tests in recruitment and selection, HM Treasury follows the British Psychological Society's Code of Practice on Occupational Testing.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21122]

John Healey: Basic literacy and numeracy are the minimum entry-level requirements for the most junior positions within HM Treasury. Consequently, only higher-level training is provided to Treasury staff.

Financial Services Authority

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the work of the Financial Services Authority in monitoring private pension schemes. [19093]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* With respect to personal pensions, the Financial Services Authority (FSA) has responsibility under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 for the prudential regulation of many providers of these

schemes and for the way these firms and separate intermediaries market and sell these products to consumers.

The FSA takes a risk-based approach to regulation, ensuring that it regulates in a proportionate and effective way. Irrespective of the product type, the FSA has a wide range of regulatory tools at its disposal, most importantly authorisation, supervision, and where appropriate enforcement and discipline. These tools allow the FSA to take proportionate action in line with its statutory objectives.

Financing Negotiations (EU)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the UK presidency plans to take forward future financing negotiations in the EU. [21594]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK remains committed to working towards a deal on future financing during its presidency of the EU. To this end, the presidency has held bilateral consultations with all member states, Bulgaria, and Romania on future financing and is now reflecting on the results. The Prime Minister will update Heads of State and Government at the Hampton Court informal meeting on 27 October. The presidency will then take the issue forward in November, starting with an initial discussion at the 7 November GAERC. Any decision would be taken at the European Council on 15–16 December.

Fiscal Reform

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to reform the fiscal rules. [21016]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are no plans to reform the fiscal rules at this time. However, as noted in the Government's response to the TSC report on the 2004 pre-Budget report, the Government, of course, keeps the macroeconomic framework under review to ensure that it remains at the forefront of international best practice.

Income Tax

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of taxpayers in *(a)* South Swindon and *(b)* the UK paid tax at the (i) basic rate and (ii) higher rate in 2004–05. [20309]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to table 2.1 'Number of individual income taxpayers' on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table2-1.pdf

The percentages of individual paying income tax at the basic rate and higher rate in the UK can be calculated from the data provided in the table.

The income tax information is based upon the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) projected forward to 2004–05 in line with Budget 2005 assumptions.

Latest information on the estimated number of income taxpayers in South Swindon constituency is shown in table 3.15 'Total Income by Parliamentary Constituency' on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/table-3-15.xls

A breakdown by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at constituency level are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Investors Compensation Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the value of professional indemnity insurance when a firm failing its obligations will be eligible for support from the Investors Compensation Scheme. [20903]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: When a person has a claim against a firm the liability is that of the firm. Any professional indemnity policy taken out by the firm should provide it with funds to meet eligible claims, subject to the terms of the policy. Providing its liabilities are all met the firm will be able to continue in business.

The Investors Compensation Scheme (now the Financial Services Compensation Scheme) steps in as a last resort when, despite any claim that may be successful under a professional indemnity insurance policy, there is compensation remaining due to the consumer and the firm is certified as in default. Compensation may then be paid by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme to the consumer.

Local Tax Offices

Mr. Swire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what public consultation was undertaken before the decision was made that payment of tax would not be accepted at local tax offices after 31 December. [20881]

Dawn Primarolo: The change is consistent with policy adopted, in respect of cash handling, by other large organisations and Government Departments. Customers are able to pay tax by cash at post offices and banks.

Low Value Consignment Relief (Jersey)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received calling for the reduction or ending of Low Value Consignment Relief on goods sent by mail order from Jersey; what his estimate is of the consequent loss of revenue to his Department; and if he will make a statement. [20889]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have received a number of representations from stakeholders on this issue and is keeping it under review. We would need to ensure that any decision to change the relief reflected a full consideration of the potential impact on UK businesses, consumers and taxpayers.

The Government estimates that, per annum, around £80 million in potential VAT receipts is lost through this relief, with about £40 million of this attributable to imports from Jersey.

Malnutrition

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many deaths malnutrition was given as a cause of death in each of the last 10 years, broken down by age. [20488]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 25 October 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for how many deaths malnutrition was given as a cause of death in each of the last 10 years broken down by age. I am replying in her absence. (20488)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2003. Figures showing numbers of deaths by age where malnutrition or deprivation of food was mentioned on the death certificate are given in the attached table for each year from 1994 to 2003.

Number of deaths where malnutrition or deprivation of food[1] was mentioned on the death certificate, persons by age group, England and Wales, 1994 to 2003[2]

	Under 15	*15–44*	*45–64*	*65–84*	*85 plus*	*All ages*
1994	2	13	27	116	72	230
1995	2	22	22	121	81	248
1996	3	16	41	131	65	256
1997	2	23	28	118	66	237
1998	1	11	38	111	60	221
1999	3	16	47	143	62	271
2000	3	19	39	119	59	239
2001	2	19	37	127	73	258
2002	2	21	51	141	81	296
2003	3	21	63	127	72	286

[1] Cause of death was defined using the codes below from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for the years 1994 to 2000, and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) from 2001 onwards.
ICD-9:
260—Kwashiorkor;
261—Nutritional marasmus;
262—Other severe protein-calorie malnutrition;
263—Other and unspecified protein-calorie malnutrition;
994.2—Effects of hunger.
ICD-10:
E40-E46—Malnutrition;
T73.0—Effects of hunger.
[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

National Lottery (Duty)

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue his Department expects to receive in national lottery duty in each year from 2005 until 2012. [21652]

Dawn Primarolo: Revenue forecasts were set out in the Financial Statement and Budget Report and will be updated in the pre-Budget report.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue his Department received in national lottery duty during each year from 1997 to 2005. [21653]

Dawn Primarolo: Revenues from gambling taxes are published in the HM Revenue and Customs Betting, Gaming and Lottery Duties Bulletin, available at http://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/index.cfm?task = bullbett

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his Department's contribution to the establishment of the new deal for skills. [21814]

John Healey: The Chancellor announced a new deal for skills in the 2004 Budget. The Departments for Work and Pensions, and Education and Skills, Trade and Industry and Treasury have worked jointly to develop the three main strands: Skills Coaching, Skills Passports and the Adult Learning Option. The new deal for skills is being delivered by the Departments for Education of Skills and for Work and Pensions as a joint project.

More detail on the new deal for skills may be found in the Libraries of the House and at

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/8F5/94/pbr04skills_41O.pdf
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D53/E4/bud04_ch3_281.pdf
http://www.dfes.gov.uk/skillsstrategy/

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Tenants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants are in receipt of child tax credits, broken down by *(a)* district housing executive area and *(b)* parliamentary constituency; and if he will make a statement. [21253]

Dawn Primarolo: There is no information available on child tax credit receipts of Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants.

Estimates for 2003–04 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04 are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Finalised Awards. 2003–04 Geographical Analysis." This publication and provisional estimates for the number of in-work families by constituency with tax credit awards as at selected dates in 2004–05 are available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the rate of employer contribution to the pension schemes of civil servants employed by HM Revenue and Customs in the most recent year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* classic scheme, *(b)* premium scheme, *(c)* classic plus scheme and *(d)* partnership pension account; and if he will make a statement. [20011]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is as follows.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS)

Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (ASLCs) are the contributions paid by employers, including HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to the Cabinet Office to provide cover for the PCSPS members they employ.

The following table shows the annual full-time salary band used to determine the appropriate band of charge for members of the Classic, Classic Plus and Premium schemes, expressed as a percentage.

The salary bands applicable from 1 April 2004 are:

Salary band	*Rate of charge*	*Percentage*
Band 1	£17,500 and under	12.0
Band 2	£17,501 to 36,000	13.5
Band 3	£36,001 to 62,000	16.5
Band 4	£62,001 and over	18.5

Partnership Pension Account

Employer age related contributions to the Partnership Pension Account are:

Age at the last 6 April	*Percentage of pensionable earnings*
Under 21	3.0
21 to 25	4.5
26 to 30	6.5
31 to 35	8.0
36 to 40	10.0
41 to 45	11.5
46 or over	12.5

On top of this, the employer will match any regular member contributions up to 3 per cent. of their pensionable earnings.

The mini-ASLC for the provision of risk benefits to those opting for Partnership Pension Account arrangements is 0.8 per cent. of member's pensionable earnings.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his estimate is of the cost to the Government of dropping the plans to raise public sector pension ages to 65 years for existing public sector workers in each of the next 40 years; and if he will make a statement; [21206]

(2) pursuant to the announcement on 18 June on public sector pensions reform, what the cost is of his proposal that all new scheme members have the right to retire at age 60 years; and if he will make a statement; [21427]

(3) pursuant to the announcement on 18 June on public sector pensions reform, after which date new scheme entrants will have a normal pension age of 65 years; and if he will make a statement. [21428]

Mr. Des Browne: The overall savings from increasing pension ages, after allowing for recycling monies into scheme improvements, had been estimated to have a net present value of around £13 billion over the next 50 years. That would have come mostly from long-term savings on new entrants benefits. We still expect comparable net savings once the reforms are finalised. The principles for reforming civil service, NHS and teachers pensions agreed at the Public Services Forum provide that proposals for reforming schemes should be agreed by June 2006 and that new schemes with a normal pension age of 65 should be implemented for new entrants as soon as practicable thereafter. The pension terms for existing members, including pension ages, will be discussed in scheme specific negotiations.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the total level of annual contributions made by public sector workers towards the cost of their final salary pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [20661]

Mr. Des Browne: Employee contributions to unfunded public service pension schemes totalled around £4 billion for the financial year 2003–04. Employee contributions for the funded Local Government Pension Scheme in the same year totalled around £1.5 billion. Government do not hold aggregate estimates of employee contributions in the wider public sector.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the real annual growth rate of spending on public sector pensions for *(a)* 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* 2004–05 to 2008–09; and if he will make a statement. [20685]

Mr. Des Browne: Figures for Government spending on unfunded public service pensions that are included within Annually Managed Expenditure are published in table B.1 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005 (PESA). That table covers 1999–2000 to 2007–08; a comparable table for earlier years is not available. The PESA table includes payments in respect of transfers of liabilities within central Government as well as payments to pensioners. It does not include unfunded police and firefighter pensions paid by local authorities, which are included within line D.623 of Table 5.3.4S of the United Kingdom National Accounts—the "Blue Book"—2005. Figures for spending on Local Government Pension Scheme benefits in England and Wales are available at:

www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/data/table1.pdf.

Real terms figures can be calculated using GDP deflators found on HM Treasury's website:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/gdp_deflators/data_adp_index.cfm

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of public sector pensions as a percentage of gross domestic product in *(a)* 1990–91, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2020–21; what

estimate he has made of savings which may be made under current reform of public sector retirement ages; and if he will make a statement. [20871]

Mr. Des Browne: The Long Term Public Finance Report, published alongside the pre-Budget report in December 2004 estimated gross expenditure on unfunded public service pensions in 2003–04 to be 1.5 per cent. of GDP rising to 2.1 per cent. of GDP in 2023–24 and 2.2 per cent. of GDP in 2053–54. Comparable figures for 1990–91 are not available, if the effect of pension age reform had not been included it is estimated that gross expenditure in 2053–54 would have been 2.4 per cent. of GDP. We still expect comparable savings from higher pension ages once the reforms are finalised.

Public Borrowing

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the level of public borrowing in 2005–06. [21014]

John Healey: Budget 2005 set out the Government's latest projections for public sector net borrowing in 2005–06. Updated estimates will be published in the pre-Budget report.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether public borrowing is estimated to exceed spending at the end of the current financial year. [21015]

John Healey: Budget 2005 projections for 2005–06 for public sector net borrowing and total managed expenditure were respectively £32 billion and £519 billion. Updated estimates will be published in the pre-Budget report.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department are seconded from accountancy houses; and how many of his officials have worked on secondment to outside accountancy houses. [20553]

John Healey: Details of those working in HM Treasury on secondment from other organisations are published on our website at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/about_secondee.cfm.

Two current employees have worked on secondment to outside accountancy houses.

SIPPS

Hywel Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what discussions he has had with the English regional assemblies regarding the affordability of housing in rural areas after investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme is allowed on A-Day; [21367]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the affordability of housing in rural areas in England after investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme is allowed on A-Day; [21368]

(3) what discussions he has had with the Building Societies Association regarding changes in the level of investment and savings in building societies as a consequence of allowing investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme from A-Day on 6 April 2006; [21369]

(4) what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Executive regarding the affordability of housing in Wales and Scotland after investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme is allowed on A-Day; [21370]

(5) what assessment he has made of the likely change in the number of self-invested personal pension schemes following A-day on 6 April 2006; [21372]

(6) what assessment he has made of the potential loss of tax revenue as a consequence of allowing investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme from 6 April 2006; [21373]

(7) what discussions he has had with the pensions industry on his proposal to allow investment in residential property as part of a self-invested personal pension scheme from A-day on 6 April 2006. [21374]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government have consulted on the rules for pension simplification twice. The December 2002 consultation "Simplifying the taxation of pensions: Increasing Choice and flexibility for all", and the December 2003 consultation "Simplifying the taxation of pensions: the Government's proposals" set out the framework and the detail of how the simplification of the taxation of pensions would be implemented. Simplification has been widely welcomed by savers and the financial services and pensions industry.

The regulatory impact assessment (RIA) "Simplifying the Taxation of Pensions" published in April 2004 set out an assessment of the potential impact of the whole pensions simplification package.

The Government will keep this aspect of the tax system, as with all others, under review.

Stamp Duty Tax Relief

Hywel Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make an assessment of the merits of introducing stamp duty tax relief in deprived wards. [21282]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Relief from stamp duty land tax already applies to purchases of residential property in designated disadvantaged areas where the price paid (or the lease premium) does not exceed £150,000. Qualifying areas include some 40 per cent. of electoral divisions in Wales.

Sustainable Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made of progress towards implementation of measures outlined in the last departmental sustainable development action plan; and what progress has been made against each target. [21998]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 320W.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what rating for the Department's estate has been attained under the most recent assessment of the application of BREEAM98. [22000]

John Healey: Excellent.

Tax Credits

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been paid to the organisation awarded the contract to run the tax credits system. [17169]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits IT system went live in April 2003, under an outsourcing contract with EDS. On 1 July 2004 a new contract commenced with Capgemini and they took over the running of the IT system. The identifiable costs paid to these suppliers for running the IT tax credits system up to 31 August 2005, including costs in the pre 'go-live' stages, was £236 million, exclusive of VAT.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has stopped sending out unnecessary duplications of award notices to tax credit claimants; and when changes to stop this happening came into effect. [17639]

Dawn Primarolo: An award notice is sent to a claimant in response to their initial claim, each time a change in their circumstances is reported, when their award is finalised and also when their award is renewed for the next year. A copy goes to both members of a joint household.

HM Revenue and Customs improved the guidance provided to helpline advisers in June 2005. These improvements should ensure that the reporting of multiple changes of circumstances is handled in one process, resulting in the issue of one award notice to cover all the changes reported in the claimant's call.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time taken from HM Revenue and Customs issuing instructions to an employer to stop paying the working tax credit element of the tax credit award and the payments stopping has been in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* the 2005–06 tax year; and what the value of overpayments that have been accrued as a result has been in each year. [18253]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Employers normally have 42 days to implement a stop notice. However, employers pay working tax credit with, and for the same period as, pay, so the timing of the final payment will depend on the individual employer's payroll arrangements. And where the employee has left the employment before the stop date, the employer may have stopped payment of working tax credit before he receives the stop notice.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost per minute is of calls made to the tax credit hotlines; and if he will make a statement. [18591]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits hotline numbers in tax credit office attract local or national rates depending on where the call is made from. Costs will vary depending upon the caller's service provider.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many changes of circumstances were reported to HM Revenue and Customs sections dealing with tax credits in each of the last two financial years. [19263]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available in the form requested.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the National Audit Office Report on the Accounts of the Inland Revenue 2004–05, with particular reference to the potential for tax credit overpayments in 2004–05. [19750]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1109W.

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the analysis of the household survey data for 2003–04 to provide an estimate of families eligible for, but not claiming, child tax credits will be concluded. [19755]

Dawn Primarolo: Work to produce an estimate of the number of families eligible for, but not claiming child tax credit in 2003–04 is continuing and we expect this analysis to be completed towards the end of 2005–06.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what budget provision has been made by HM Revenue and Customs for tax credit overpayments which will not be recovered in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [19856]

Dawn Primarolo: Budget provisions relating to tax credits are published in the C and AG's Standard Report of the Accounts of the Inland Revenue 2004–05 (available at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/ir-report 2005.pdf). This is a cautious provision—it is not a forecast, and HMRC will be seeking to recover money that is due.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the take-up rates of *(a)* child tax credits and *(b)* working tax credits. [20006]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my previous reply to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1700W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his original estimate was for planning purposes of the level of tax credit overpayments in the new tax credits introduced in 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [20009]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2034W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of tax credits introduced in 2003 on work incentives; and if he will make a statement. [20439]

Dawn Primarolo: The child and working tax credits, introduced in 2003, build upon previous reforms designed to make work pay, including the working families tax credit. Independent evidence showed that the working families tax credit added over 5 per cent. to the lone parent employment rate. The child and working tax credits offer further improvements including:

greater financial security on the move into work through an integrated system of support for families both in and out of work;

enhanced work incentives for second earners through a new, fairer assessment of family income, and a reduction in the rate at which awards are withdrawn;

tackling child care costs as a barrier to work by supporting up to 80 per cent. of eligible child care costs up to a maximum of £300 per week (or £175 for one child) from April 2006;

increased gain to work for tenants working part-time by up to £10.70 per week, through better interaction of working tax credit and housing benefit;

increased gain to work for low-income working people without children, aged over 24 and working more than 30 hours per week, through the extension of in-work support to this group.

Since April 1999 the minimum income guarantee for a family with one child, working full time, has increased from £182 to £260 per week. For the same family working part-time, the minimum income guarantee has increase from £136 to £202 per week now. Tax credits have been an important part of this improvement.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were in receipt of tax credits in Northern Ireland on 1 October, broken down by *(a)* tax credit and *(b)* parliamentary constituency. [20639]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest snapshot estimates of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards at April 2005 are available in "Child and Working Tax Credits. April 2005", which can be found at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-quarterly-stats.htm. These are also available broken down by country and constituency in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical Analyses. April 2005". This publication is available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have received an overpayment of tax credits in Northern Ireland in each month since their introduction; and if he will make a statement on steps being taken to address this matter. [20642]

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the number of tax credit awards overpaid to people in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [21621]

Dawn Primarolo: Annual estimates for 2003–04 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards, including information on overpayments and underpayments by country within the UK, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04 are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Finalised Awards. 2003–04 Geographical Analysis." This publication and provisional estimates for the number of in-work families by country with tax credit awards as at selected dates in 2004–05 are available on the HMRC website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the reports on the new tax credits system prepared by the Office of Government Commerce and provided to the Prime Minister; and on what dates each was received. [20688]

Dawn Primarolo: The Office of Government Commerce provides regular reports to Ministers, including the Prime Minister, on a wide range of issues. Information relating to advice and opinion within Government is not disclosed, as to do so could prejudice internal discussion and advice.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the number of tax credit awards overpaid in 2004–05; what estimate he has made of how much these overpayments are worth; and if he will make a statement. [20689]

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the level of overpayment of tax credits in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [20721]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Members to the answer given to the hon. Member for St. Albans (Anne Main) on 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 428.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what rationale has been applied in determining the level of the provision for doubtful debt relating to tax credit overpayments as reported in the Department of Inland Revenue 2004–05 Accounts; to what extent the provision is calculated on *(a)* a specific and *(b)* a general basis; and if he will make a statement. [20691]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him on the 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1103W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of the administration of tax credits in 2004–05. [20693]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 949W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 had their awards reduced by (i) 10 per cent., (ii) 25 per cent. and (iii) 100 per cent. for the recovery of a previous year's overpayment. [21819]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 326W.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been overpaid to tax credit recipients in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the north east and *(d)* the UK in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005 to date. [21057]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Mid- Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 321–22W.

Tax Statistics

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers in each parliamentary constituency paid the *(a)* starting, *(b)* basic and *(c)* higher rate of tax in the last year for which figures are available. [21479]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest information on the estimated number of income taxpayers and their mean and median total income by constituency, is shown in table 3.15 "Total Income by Parliamentary Constituency" on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/table-3-15.xls.

The income tax information is based upon the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI).

A breakdown of income taxpayers by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at constituency level are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Unemployment

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people *(a)* have been unemployed and *(b)* have been unemployed in each ward of the Vale of Clwyd in each of the last 30 years. [20319]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 25 October 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (20319)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions. Table 1 attached, shows estimates of the number unemployed in the UK as a whole, aged 16 and over for the three month period ending in August, for the years 1975–2005.

Estimates of unemployment consistent with the ILO definition are not available for wards as the sample size of surveys for such areas is too small. However ONS compiles statistics of Job Seeker's Allowance claimants for wards.

For the years 1996 to 2004, Table 2 gives annual averages of the number of JSA claimants resident in each ward in the Vale of Clwyd Parliamentary Constituency. Comparable information for the wards on consistent boundaries is not available for years prior to 1996.

Table 1: All persons unemployed aged 16 and over, United Kingdom

Seasonally adjusted Three months ending August each year	*Thousand Level*
1975	1,193
1976	1,425
1977	1,481
1978	1,459
1979	1,422
1980	1,828
1981	2,654
1982	2,877
1983	3,093
1984	3,242
1985	3,139
1986	3,175
1987	2,929
1988	2,416
1989	2,057
1990	2,024
1991	2,585
1992	2,819
1993	2,909
1994	2,691
1995	2,433
1996	2,279
1997	2,015
1998	1,800
1999	1,701
2000	1,523
2001	1,477
2002	1,532
2003	1,498
2004	1,396
2005	1,417

Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Vale of Clwyd parliamentary constituency and in wards within it

								Annual averages	
	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Vale of Clwyd parliamentary constituency	2,585	1,875	1,540	1,565	1,340	1,205	1,010	950	905
Vale of Clwyd wards									
Trefnant	30	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	5
Denbigh Central	95	60	45	40	35	25	25	25	20
Denbigh Lower	60	50	35	40	25	25	25	20	15
Denbigh Upper	130	90	80	75	60	55	40	40	40
Henllan	15	10	10	10	5	5	5	5	5
Llandymog	25	15	10	15	15	10	5	5	5
Bodelwyddan	60	50	40	35	25	30	20	15	20
Dyserth	75	50	40	45	35	30	25	15	15
Meliden	75	55	45	55	45	40	25	20	15
Prestatyn Central	120	85	55	65	50	45	35	40	30
Prestatyn East	130	85	70	80	55	50	45	40	35
Prestatyn North	135	90	75	85	70	60	55	50	50
Prestatyn South West	70	40	40	45	35	35	30	30	30
Rhuddlan	110	85	60	75	60	40	40	30	30
Rhyl East	200	140	115	105	85	85	80	85	70
Rhyl South	120	85	80	70	65	60	50	50	40
Rhyl South East	200	150	130	125	105	90	70	55	60
Rhyl South West	230	185	150	160	155	145	115	110	115

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Vale of Clwyd parliamentary constituency and in wards within it

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Annual averages 2003	2004
Rhyl West	590	465	390	380	350	320	280	275	265
St. Asaph East	35	25	20	15	10	15	10	10	15
St. Asaph West	50	30	20	25	15	15	10	10	10
Tremeirchion	30	15	15	15	15	15	10	10	10

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the change in the level of unemployment has been in the Jarrow constituency in each year since 1997. [21055]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 25 October 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on changes in unemployment levels. I am replying in her absence. (21055)

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers of unemployed people, aged 16 and over, resident in the Jarrow constituency, for the periods ending in February each year from 1997 to 2004 (based on annual local area Labour Force Survey data) and for April 2004 to March 2005, the latest available data, from the Annual Population Survey. These estimates as with any sample survey are subject to sampling variability and estimates of year to year change are not reliable.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Tables 2, attached, shows the annual average number of adult JSA claimants resident in the Jarrow constituency, for 1997 to 2004, and year on year changes in these numbers.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk

Table 1: Unemployed people aged 16 and over in the Jarrow constituency

Thousand 12 months ending	Number of unemployed
February 1997	5
February 1998	5
February 1999	3
February 2000	4
February 2001	4
February 2002	4
February 2003	3
February 2004	3
March 2005	3

Notes:
1. These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability.
2. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey.

Table 2: JSA claimants (aged 18 to 24) and change from the previous year[1] in the Jarrow constituency

Annual averages	JSA Claimants	Change on year
1997	3,120	—
1998	2,765	-355
1999	2,820	55
2000	2,625	-195
2001	2,375	-250
2002	2,275	-105
2003	1,985	-285
2004	1,740	-245

[1] Both the number of claimants and the change on year are rounded to the nearest five but the changes are calculated from unrounded numbers.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment has been in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [21056]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 25 October 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (21056)

Table 1 attached, shows the total number of unemployed youths (aged 16 to 24) in the Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside local authority, North East Government Office Region and for the UK for the periods ending in February each year from 1997 to 2004 (based on annual local area Labour Force Survey data) and for April 2004 to March 2005, the latest available data, from the Annual Population Survey. These estimates, as with any sample survey, are subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2, attached, shows the annual average number of JSA claimants aged 18 to 24 resident in the Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside, North East Government Office Region and the UK for 1997 to 2004.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics' Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Numbers of unemployed, aged 16 to 24, resident in the Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside local authority, North East Government Office Region and UK

12 months ending	Jarrow	South Tyneside	North East	UK
February 1997	2	3	33	684
February 1998	2	2	36	616
February 1999	1	2	27	583
February 2000	1	3	34	556
February 2001	1	3	34	535
February 2002	1	2	30	525
February 2003	1	2	28	553
February 2004	2	3	34	557
March 2005	1	2	31	559

Note:
The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside local authority, North East Government Office Region and UK

Annual averages	*Jarrow*	*South Tyneside*	*North East*	*UK*
1997	800	1,800	25,670	406,415
1998	665	1,500	22,680	339,000
1999	655	1,460	20,505	294,125
2000	585	1,300	19,030	261,470
2001	555	1,235	17,580	241,220
2002	525	1,170	16,920	242,930
2003	510	1,160	16,365	249,055
2004	465	1,085	14,680	235,910

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative System

Workless Households

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of children have lived in households with two adults, neither in work in each year since 1982; and if he will make a statement. [20687]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. David Laws, dated 25 October 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about children living with two adults, neither of whom is working. (20687)

The attached table gives the proportion of children who live with a married or cohabiting couple in which neither partner is working, for the three month period to May of each year from 1992 to 2005. These estimates are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Information for previous years is not available.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling error.

Proportion of all children who live with a married or cohabiting couple in which neither partner is working[1,2,3]: 1992 to 2005—United Kingdom, not seasonally adjusted

March to May	*Per cent*
1992	10.1
1993	10.0
1994	10.0
1995	9.0
1996	8.6
1997	7.4
1998	6.7
1999	6.2
2000	5.7
2001	5.5
2002	5.7
2003	4.9
2004	5.0
2005	5.1

[1] Children under 16 years old.
[2] Children who live with a workless couple as a percentage of all children.
[3] Estimates take into account couples with unknown economic status.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Architects Registration Board

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he next expects to make appointments to the Architects Registration Board. [19960]

Yvette Cooper: The Secretary of State has powers to make recommendations to the Privy Council in respect of the appointment of lay members to the board. The council then makes appointments. One vacancy is currently being filled; three further appointments will need to be made with effect from 1 April 2006.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what appeal process is available to architects who have had complaints against them upheld by the Architects Registration Board. [19961]

Yvette Cooper: The Architects Act 1997 provides that any person may appeal to the civil courts about removal of his name from the Register of Architects or the making of a disciplinary order against him. Persons may also apply for judicial review of any decision made by the board.

Admiralty House

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 298W, on council tax, what contribution his Department has made towards the total maintenance, renovation and running costs of Admiralty House, in each year since its establishment; and what the estimated figure is for 2005–06. [12032]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The total cost of maintaining, renovating, and running Admiralty House in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 was £345,929, £216,487 and £246,284. The estimated figure for 2005–06 is £269,126. These figures exclude business rates and council tax payable on the building. The cost covers work across the whole of Admiralty House which, as well as three flats assigned to Ministers by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, includes function rooms used by Government for more than 200 events every year.

The operation of Admiralty House is covered by a single facilities management contract which covers maintenance, renovation, security and running costs. It is not possible, within the overall total, to separately identify the costs that arise from the three flats in Admiralty House, although for internal accounting purposes the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister meets 20.7 per cent. of the costs of the operation of the entire building. This is calculated on the basis of the floor area of the flat occupied by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, as a proportion of the total floor area of Admiralty House. The actual amounts paid by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in each year reflect that the Office was established in May 2002, and thus did not pay costs for the whole of 2002–03, and benefited from an internal accounting adjustment that reduced ODPM's contribution in 2003–04. In addition there were minor works specific to the flat occupied by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, amounting to £1,087 in 2004–05 and £159 to date in 2005–06.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* gross total expenditure and *(b)* gross revenue raised from council tax in each precepting and billing local authority in England was in the latest year for which figures are available. [19915]

Mr. Woolas: Details of *(a)* total service expenditure and *(b)* the council tax requirement for 2004–05 are published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website and can be found at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/0405pro.xls at line 699 and line 890 respectively.

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from Revenue Summary returns for 2004–05.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many pensioners in Gravesham have experienced increases in their council taxes since 1997. [20186]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average band D council tax has been in Suffolk in each year since the establishment of the council tax. [19778]

Mr. Woolas: Details of the average band D council tax in each authority in Suffolk in each year since establishment of the council tax are published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The details can be found under "Information For Taxpayers" at "Council Taxes" and "Historical Data Archive" which can be found at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/ct.htm.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* costs and *(b)* contractual liabilities were incurred for the council tax revaluation in England by (i) the Valuation Office Agency and (ii) central Government prior to its postponement. [17356]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency has incurred approximately £60 million in costs and contractual liabilities in relation to the revaluation in England prior to its postponement. Some £45 million will be of potential use in the future for the Agency's routine business or revaluation at a later date. Costs incurred by central Government are not separately identified.

Departmental Finance

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the phrase "corporate overhead" in the Department's business plan covers. [20755]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Corporate Overhead budget provides money for essential operational services, activities and costs which are procured or managed centrally. The chief elements of this are: accommodation costs; cost of capital and depreciation on our assets; provision of IT services; long-term sickness and maternity pay; and centrally funded training.

Empty Homes

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for introducing secondary legislation on empty dwelling management orders. [19888]

Yvette Cooper: The Government published the detailed programme for commencement of the Housing Act 2004 on Monday 10 October. There will be a phased introduction of the provisions, leading to a common commencement date of 6 April 2006 for the provisions contained within the Housing Act 2004, including Empty Dwelling Management Orders. The full timetable, setting out the phased introduction of these provisions, has been listed as follows.

Housing Act 2004—implementation of HHSRS, licensing, EDMO and TDS

Week commencing 28 November 2005

Lay HHSRS SI

Publish draft licensing SIs for limited consultation (two weeks max.)

Publish draft EDMO SI for limited consultation

Publish consultation paper on tenancy deposit protection SIs

Week commencing 30 January 2006

Lay licensing SIs

Lay EDMO SI

Lay ACOP and student exemption SI

Publish private landlords project toolkit

Week commencing 13 March 2006

Lay RPT SIs

6 April 2006

Commence HHSRS

Commence licensing (parts 2 and 3) except enforcement provisions

Commence EDMO and part 4

Commence RPT and new lands tribunal rules

Commence ACOP and students exemption

Commence part 7 provisions

Commence trans arrangements and repeal HA 85 provisions

Announce successful bids for TDS

3 July 2006

Commence parts 2 and 3 enforcement and RROS

Lay tenancy deposit protection SI

Week commencing 2 October 2006

Commence tenancy deposit protection

Fire Control Centres

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will meet the Hampshire fire and rescue authority to discuss the proposal for a South East regional fire control centre. [18574]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have now announced the locations of the eight new English regional fire control centres outside London, including the one in the South East. On 16 August I made a very interesting visit to Hampshire fire and rescue authority, within whose boundaries the South East regional fire control centre will lie. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises the importance of elected members as key partners in delivering this project, and will be holding a series of meetings for elected Members for every region from November 2005 into early 2006 to deal with any issues they may wish to raise. Dates for these will be published shortly.

Fires

Mr. Barstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* accidental and *(b)* non-accidental fires were recorded in each London borough in each year since 1997. [20715]

Jim Fitzpatrick: London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) have supplied the information in the following table on the number of fires attended in each London borough from 1999–2000 to 2004–05. Data prior to these dates is not available.

(a) Accidental fires attended in each London borough, 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Barking and Dagenham	567	481	610	516	605	546
Barnet	750	671	635	589	821	637
Bexley	458	367	477	371	547	500
Brent	801	681	759	673	820	615
Bromley	596	497	510	452	632	477
Camden	843	735	808	787	724	753
City of London	100	116	120	98	112	107
Croydon	876	743	820	632	915	657
Ealing	751	682	638	682	910	720
Enfield	659	584	665	562	775	682
Greenwich	864	713	815	701	853	623
Hackney	990	879	739	680	877	910
Hammersmith and Fulham	513	489	454	422	504	467
Haringey	731	670	717	643	677	639
Harrow	342	332	348	353	433	340
Havering	545	437	514	415	570	471
Hillingdon	675	600	652	597	857	637
Hounslow	656	580	597	528	725	475
Islington	708	615	658	576	665	552
Kensington and Chelsea	513	480	477	385	471	400
Kingston upon Thames	336	312	302	281	363	272
Lambeth	1,116	1,028	1,110	918	961	841
Lewisham	692	693	718	641	840	676
Merton	513	424	468	438	496	361
Newham	1,013	757	875	756	989	821
Redbridge	549	461	483	467	841	553
Richmond upon Thames	330	261	309	271	428	270
Southwark	1,091	1,043	1,088	994	1,162	1,066
Sutton	396	340	367	341	402	328
Tower Hamlets	1,216	1,039	1,123	967	1,125	979
Waltham Forest	690	543	590	501	789	541
Wandsworth	745	659	710	656	760	621
Westminster	1,133	1,077	1,111	971	1,004	977
Unknown	241	178	51	10	47	14
Total	22,999	20,167	21,318	18,874	23,700	19,528

(b) Non-accidental fires attended in each London borough, 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Barking and Dagenham	1,269	1,457	1,839	1,539	2,344	656
Barnet	596	580	698	702	814	620
Bexley	992	860	1,272	920	1,417	539
Brent	506	548	610	545	693	577
Bromley	1,106	1,236	1,362	1,245	1,503	620
Camden	547	566	662	682	584	647
City of London	25	12	15	16	16	89
Croydon	876	831	1,125	841	1,171	668
Ealing	742	729	1,085	847	943	690
Enfield	819	761	1,161	982	1,342	664
Greenwich	1,540	1,522	1,952	1,578	2,413	708
Hackney	1,078	1,453	1,874	1,246	1,087	827
Hammersmith and Fulham	257	300	292	313	327	389
Haringey	717	666	851	748	748	592
Harrow	261	330	477	392	407	310
Havering	686	823	1,317	1,058	1,525	539
Hillingdon	914	934	1,344	1,265	1,267	625
Hounslow	951	788	1,277	1,048	1,384	552
Islington	1,028	942	1,139	1,119	1,039	518
Kensington and Chelsea	175	154	187	129	197	345
Kingston upon Thames	230	241	309	245	346	273
Lambeth	1,007	1,012	933	777	810	762
Lewisham	914	823	865	793	975	646
Merton	563	510	679	604	720	353
Newham	1,994	1,992	2,747	2,133	1,983	849

(b) Non-accidental fires attended in each London borough, 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Redbridge	420	549	838	690	822	577
Richmond upon Thames	254	248	229	254	326	257
Southwark	1,362	1,421	1,648	1,342	1,362	988
Sutton	384	460	622	540	720	332
Tower Hamlets	1,845	2,178	2,911	2,176	2,403	1,113
Waltham Forest	653	579	723	784	976	544
Wandsworth	630	506	561	474	611	594
Westminster	317	388	403	395	301	800
Unknown	319	240	98	30	39	15
Total	25,977	26,639	34,105	28,452	33,615	19,278

Note:
The number of fires attended includes both primary and secondary fires.
Source:
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fires broke out in Essex in the last year for which figures are available; and what percentage were caused by arson. [21037]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the number of fires attended by Essex fire and rescue service in 2004–05 is shown in the following table.

Fires attended in 2004–05 by Essex FRS

	Primary fires	Secondary fires
Accidental	1,736	3,842
Deliberate	1,530	1,143
Total	3,266	4,985

Note:
Figures are provisional and were published on 13 October 2005.
Source:
Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 and FDR3 returns to ODPM.

In the year 2004–05, 47 per cent. of primary fires and 23 per cent. of secondary fires were started deliberately. Overall, 32 per cent. were started deliberately.

Greater London Authority

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what extra *(a)* powers and *(b)* responsibilities the Government are considering transferring to the Greater London authority. [19879]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are considering a number of powers and responsibilities for transfer to the Greater London authority, and will consult on its proposals later this autumn.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning guidance and publications the Government have published since May 1997 that relate to the development of Traveller sites on *(a)* green field and *(b)* Green Belt sites. [15240]

Yvette Cooper: The draft Circular 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites' was issued for consultation in 2004, and includes guidance on development in the Green Belt which is in line with the policies in Planning Policy Guidance 2, published in 1995. Planning restrictions in the Green Belt are the same for Gypsies and Travellers as they are for the settled community.

The Government have published various Planning Policy Statements and Guidance since May 1997 that support the general policy presumption of development of appropriately located, previously developed sites, for any purpose, in preference to development of green field sites.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to prevent further development of green belt land beyond existing commitments; and if he will make a statement. [20840]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have made clear that they remain committed to the green belt. We do not have any plans to change the existing policy in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 2, Green Belts, that strictly controls development in the green belt. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt which should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has been consulting on proposals to introduce a new Green Belt Direction that would ensure closer scrutiny of planning applications for inappropriate development that would significantly impact on the openness of the green belt, before approval could be given. ODPM is considering the responses it has received to the public consultation draft of the new Direction.

The Government have set a target for each English region to maintain or increase the area designated as green belt in local plans. Any proposals to establish new green belts, or to change the general extent of existing green belts, should be considered as part of a review of the regional spatial strategy, or the London Plan, in the first instance. This process will ensure that the proposals are subject to public consultation and discussion through an examination in public before an independent panel.

Similarly, any proposal to alter (exceptionally) a detailed green belt boundary should be considered through the preparation or review of a development plan document. This process is led by the local planning authority and is subject to community involvement and independent examination.

Homelessness

Lorely Burt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what further measures the Government plans to introduce to tackle homelessness in London. [19280]

Yvette Cooper: Our strategy 'Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives' sets out our aims to reduce homelessness and halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will work with London boroughs, Government Office for London, Greater London authority, Association of Local Government and other organisations in London to deliver the strategy and further reduce levels of rough sleeping in the capital.

Housing

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people in England have been registered as homeless and needing accommodation in each year from 1999–2000 to 2005–06, broken down by local authority area; and if he will make a statement. [18625]

Yvette Cooper: Information collected about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of households rather than persons. A table presenting reported information on the number of households accepted by each local authority in England as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty in each year since 1999–2000, has been placed in the Library of the House.

The duty owed to a person accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average time taken to place homeless families in permanent accommodation was in each local authority in England in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [18626]

Yvette Cooper: Information reported quarterly by local authorities on their activities under homelessness legislation includes the number of households that, during the quarter, left temporary accommodation provided by the authority, or who were no longer registered as "homeless at home", by the length of stay in broad time bands. The information covers all households, which will include families but also single person households. These households will have been provided with some form of settled accommodation, or those who left the accommodation voluntarily, as well as those who ceased to be eligible or who became intentionally homeless.

A table which presents the proportion of households in each time band during 2004–05 (the latest year available), for each local authority in England, has been placed in the Library of the House.

Ms Barlow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units expected to be built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund will be *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to Registered Social Landlord (RSL) stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers, *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers, *(n)* right to acquire, *(o)* voluntary purchase grant, *(p)* starter home initiative, *(q)* do-it-yourself shared ownership and *(r)* temporary intermediate and market rent housing in the south-east region in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08; and how much will be spent on each category in each year. [18679]

Yvette Cooper: The tables show the latest estimated completions and expenditure in the south-east region for 2005–06 through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, including Challenge Fund, for categories from *(a)* to *(r)*. Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Estimated completions for south-east region in 2005–06

		Units
(a)	Mixed Funded Social Rent	2,849
(b)	Temporary Social Rent	0
(c)	Homebuy Market Purchase	195
(d)	Homebuy New Build	41
(e)	Mixed Funded for Sale	1,580
(f)	Misc. works to RSL stock	241
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	28
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	18
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	10
(j)	Intermediate rent for Key Workers	562
(k)	Homebuy Market Purchase for Key Workers	1,639
(l)	Homebuy New Build for Key Workers	62
(m)	Mixed Funded for Sale for Key Workers	609
(n)	Right to Acquire	17
(o)	Voluntary Purchase Grant	13
(p)	Starter Home Initiative	0
(q)	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0
(r)	Temporary intermediate and Market rent housing	0

Estimated expenditure in south-east region for 2005–06

		£ million
(a)	Mixed Funded Social Rent	138.089
(b)	Temporary Social Rent	0.000
(c)	Homebuy Market Purchase	7.247
(d)	Homebuy New Build	0.150
(e)	Mixed Funded for Sale	24.261
(f)	Misc. works to RSL stock	0.551
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	0.367
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	0.886
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0.009
(j)	Intermediate rent for Key Workers	9.865
(k)	Homebuy Market Purchase for Key Workers	63.037
(l)	Homebuy New Build for Key Workers	1.875
(m)	Mixed Funded for Sale for Key Workers	20.443
(n)	Right to Acquire	0.221
(o)	Voluntary Purchase Grant	0.200
(p)	Starter Home Initiative	0.000
(q)	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0.000
(r)	Temporary intermediate and Market rent housing	0.000

Source:
Housing Corporation Information Management System as at 12 October 2005. Categories f, g, h, and i are not counted as completions and figures are only provided for illustrative purposes.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The South East Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £805 million for the two years a total of £744 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's bidding process.

In August 2005 the Housing Corporation launched the bidding round for the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). This invited both registered social landlords and non-registered bodies to apply for funds to develop affordable housing based on priorities set by the Regional Housing Boards. The outcome of this bidding round will not be known until early in 2006.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of *(a)* local authority housing, *(b)* housing association housing and *(c)* private rented accommodation reaches the Decent Homes Standard, broken down by region; and what proportion in each case he estimates will reach the standard by 2010. [20499]

Yvette Cooper: Data from the 2003 English House Condition Survey (EHCS) are currently only available at a national level. These data have been published in "EHCS 2003: key findings", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. A regional breakdown of 2003 EHCS will be published in due course.

In the social sector, work completed and plans in place will take The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 90 per cent. of the way to meeting our target . We are now focusing our efforts on the remaining 10 per cent.

In the private sector we are on course for 70 per cent. of vulnerable households to have decent homes by 2010.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the Regional Housing Board on the amount of affordable housing needed in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* Gravesham. [19832]

Yvette Cooper: The South East Regional Housing Board made recommendations to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on the provision of affordable housing in its South East Regional Housing Strategy published on 30 June 2005. One of the key priorities identified in the strategy is the need to increase the provision of affordable housing in the region. In recognition of this, the board recommended that almost 92 per cent. of its funding should be used to increase provision of affordable homes. The Regional Housing Board has prioritised the growth areas (Ashford, Dartford, Gravesham, Medway, Swale) and other areas in Kent (Maidstone, Canterbury) for affordable housing funding.

The amount of affordable housing needed is determined locally in local housing strategies and development plans, and it is for local authorities in consultation with the Housing Corporation to agree numbers of units. The amount of housing brought forward depends upon the number and quality of bids made to the Housing Corporation for funding. Each bid is assessed against a number of criteria including value for money, design quality, environmental fitness and deliverability.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the affordability of shared ownership schemes in areas of high house prices; and if he will make a statement. [20837]

Yvette Cooper: It is important that low cost home ownership schemes are affordable for our identified client groups, including social tenants and key public sector workers.

While traditional shared ownership schemes have been successful we do accept that there may be cases where people in higher value areas find it difficult to access schemes, or difficult to increase their share of ownership after initial purchase.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Housing Corporation keep the general operation of the schemes under review to ensure that they meet our policy objectives and the needs of the intended client groups.

The issue of affordability of low cost home ownership schemes has also been examined:

through the work of the Home Ownership Task Force, that reported in November 2003. Its report is available from the Housing Corporation's website.

through the analysis of responses to our 'Homebuy—Expanding the Opportunity to Own' consultation paper, a copy of which is available from the Library of the House.

as part of the analysis set out in the Supporting Document to the Homebuy consultation paper.

As a result of this, our new range of Homebuy schemes—which will be available from April 2006—aim to be more affordable for purchasers, while remaining viable for providers.

We have also set out how we will ensure that households accessing Homebuy are able to sustain home ownership. Applicants will be subject to a series of rigorous and transparent checks at the outset, to ensure that they are able to shoulder the financial responsibilities. We will also put in place a range of measures to provide assistance to those who encounter financial difficulties after they have purchased.

Full details of the new range of Homebuy schemes are set out in the Government's response to the consultation, available on the Office's website.

We will continue to monitor and assess the new range of Homebuy schemes to ensure that they provide affordable and accessible routes to home ownership.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was allocated to council house refits for disabled people in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* Gravesham in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion this represents of the total council housing budget in each case. [19798]

Yvette Cooper: Expenditure on disabled/elderly adaptations for Gravesham and for all stock-owning local authorities within Kent (including Gravesham) is shown in the following table, along with the total capital expenditure and the proportion of the total capital

spend that was used for disabled/elderly adaptations. These data were reported to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by local authorities.

	Local authority/county	
	Kent	Gravesham
Expenditure on disabled/elderly adaptations 2003–04 (£000)	1,139	51
Total expenditure on capital works 2003–04 (£000)	31,007	3,982
Proportion of capital expenditure spent on disabled/elderly adaptations 2003–04 (percentage)	3.7	1.3

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate *(a)* the amount of outside funding brought into social housing by large-scale voluntary transfers in the last two years and *(b)* the contributions by Government to the costs of arms length management organisations in the last two years. [20126]

Yvette Cooper: The amount of private finance brought into social housing by large-scale voluntary transfers (LSVT) was £409 million (2003–04) and £1.2 billion (2004–05).

The contribution by Government to the ALMO programme was £321 million (2003–04) and £577 million (2004–05).

Key Workers

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the categories of people who qualify for key worker status; and if he will make a statement. [20838]

Yvette Cooper: The eligibility requirements for each of the Government's key worker initiatives vary by region and criteria are constantly kept under review. Up to date eligibility requirements are published on the Housing Corporation's website.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government has made of the take-up rates for the Government's key workers' initiative schemes. [19917]

Yvette Cooper: An evaluation of the key worker living scheme is currently under way, with the final report due in 2006. The interim report was published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website on 31 August.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the eligibility requirements are for each of the Government's key worker initiative schemes. [19920]

Yvette Cooper: The eligibility requirements for each of the Government's key worker initiatives vary by region and criteria are constantly kept under review. Up to date eligibility requirements are published on the Housing Corporation's website.

Local Authority Expenditure

David Mundell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the expenditure per head was in each local authority in England for *(a)* public order and safety, *(b)* enterprise and economic development, *(c)* science and technology, *(d)* employment, *(e)* agriculture, fisheries and forestry, *(f)* transport, *(g)* environmental protection, *(h)* housing and community amenities, *(i)* health, *(j)* recreation, culture and religion, *(k)* education and training and *(l)* social protection in the last year for which figures are available. [19432]

Mr. Woolas: The data are not collected centrally for the breakdown requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister collect revenue expenditure data from each local authority in England on the annual Revenue Outturn (RO) suite of forms. Documents have been placed in the Library of the House showing provisional 2004–05 expenditure per head data by local authority for each of the main service areas collected.

Local Government Cabinets

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plan to conduct a review of the cabinet system in local government. [20747]

Mr. Woolas: The outcomes in local authorities of the constitutional arrangements, including the cabinet system, introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, are the subject of a five year research project, funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which is due to conclude in 2007.

Local Government White Paper

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for the publication of the Local Government White Paper. [19886]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister launched a debate on the future of local government, local: vision, in July 2004, with the aim of developing a new blueprint for local government that is shared between central and local government and other key stakeholders. Further details on how we intend to draw the debate back together and the next steps will be forthcoming in due course.

Micro-bikes

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to encourage local authorities to work with trading standards officers to ensure local retailers of micro-bikes act responsibly in making clear to customers the legal position regarding their use. [19357]

Mr. Woolas: None. It is for local trading standards to decide what advice they should give to businesses having regard to local circumstances and priorities.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in Gravesham since 1997. [19831]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they

also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. The hon. Member may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Pathfinder Renewal Project

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the capital modernisation fund was spent in each pathfinder renewal project, broken down by investment in *(a)* renewal, *(b)* clearance, *(c)* land purchase and *(d)* consultants. [21771]

Yvette Cooper: Each of the nine housing market renewal pathfinders was awarded £2.66 million from the Capital Modernisation Fund. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have information on the way in which it was spent that can be broken down in the way specified. However, the purpose of this grant was to help the pathfinders to build capacity and develop their strategies.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to the Newcastle-Gateshead pathfinder is over the next three years of funding a team of regeneration specialists to be employed by Newcastle city council. [21772]

Yvette Cooper: The Newcastle Gateshead housing market renewal pathfinder submitted its future spending plans to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in September 2005, as part of its scheme update. We will be considering its proposals, including those relating to staff costs, during the next few months.

Planning Delivery Grants

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of the merits of allocating a greater proportion of the planning delivery grant budget to growth areas designated by the Sustainable Communities Plan; [21286]

(2) what the level of planning delivery grant for high housing demand and growth areas was for 2005–06; what the proposed level for 2006–07 is; and what representations he has received on this subject. [21287]

Yvette Cooper: The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) is designed to reward local planning authorities (LPAs) across the country on a variety of different performance criteria to enable them to improve all aspects of the service they provide. The bulk of the grant is allocated on the basis of criteria relating to performance and workload of all LPAs. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has, however, also taken into account the extra needs of authorities in growth areas to enable them to deliver the growth required in the Sustainable Communities Plan.

In the 2005–06 PDG allocations, £16 million (9.4 per cent. of total PDG) was allocated to high housing demand and growth areas. We issued a consultation document in July on allocation criteria for the grant in 2006–07. This proposed that the percentage of grant allocated to growth areas should be 8.9 per cent. (£12 million). We received 75 responses to the consultation, 23 of which commented on high housing and growth area allocations.

Public Open Space

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recommended acreage of public open space has been set for each local authority; and how much is available in each local authority listed in descending order according to the greatest difference. [20941]

Mr. Woolas: "Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" sets out national (England-only) guidance on open space provision. It states that open space standards are best set locally, to take into account demographic profiles, the existing built environment and local needs. PPG 17 and the accompanying good practice guidance give local authorities advice on setting local standards on quality, quantity and accessibility. Local authorities are not required to make information on local open spaces available to central Government.

Regional Assemblies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) pursuant to the answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 444W, on regional assemblies, whether his Department holds copies of the corporate plans of the regional assemblies; [19858]

(2) whether his Department holds copies of documents containing the projected 2005–06 budgets of the regional chambers. [19924]

Yvette Cooper: Regional assemblies prepare three year business/corporate plans and submit them to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to inform decisions on annual funding allocations. Each assembly publishes copies of these reports on their website.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether financing of possible elected regional assemblies remains part of the remit of the Lyons' Inquiry. [21284]

Mr. Woolas: Yes. However, Sir Michael Lyons is aware of the statement to the House by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 8 November 2004 that the Government would not be introducing the Regional Assemblies Bill and would not be calling further referendums on elected assemblies, *Official Report*, 8 November 2004, columns 587–89.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Audit Commission audits regional chambers in England. [19919]

Mr. Woolas: The Audit Commission makes arrangements for the external audit to be undertaken for one regional assembly in England: the Yorkshire and Humber assembly.

Sex Offenders

Joan Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce regulations to prohibit individuals on the sexual offenders register from serving on local authorities. [19470]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to introduce such regulations.

Solar Power (Buildings)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will change new build regulations to require the inclusion of solar power. [19594]

Yvette Cooper: The Building Regulations set levels of required energy performance rather than prescribing solutions. This approach offers designers the flexibility to choose technologies that best meet their needs, that are cost-effective and practical, and that enable innovation. Without prescribing solutions the current requirements do enable builders to take the benefits of solar panels and other 'low and zero carbon' technologies such as wind generators, heat pumps and wood pellet stoves.

Supporting People Initiative

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the Audit Commission's report on the Supporting People initiative. [21679]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister welcomes the Audit Commission's report on supporting people. We believe that the Audit Commission has done an excellent job in producing a well balanced and carefully considered report which clearly highlights both the areas of concern and the benefits of the programme. The report provides a helpful base for authorities and providers to build on in improving services and in the commissioning and management of the programme.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Government *(a)* Departments and *(b)* agencies are involved in the administration of the Supporting People initiative. [21680]

Mr. Woolas: Due to the cross-cutting nature of supporting people there are five Government Departments directly involved in the administration of the programme. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is the lead Department responsible for managing and administering the programme. The four other Government Departments involved are the Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Home Office and Department for Education and Skills. No Government agencies are directly involved in the administration of supporting people, but the Audit Commission is responsible for undertaking inspections of local authorities to monitor implementation.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with the Local Government Association on the Supporting People initiative. [21681]

Mr. Woolas: Ministers and officials have ongoing discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Local Government Association, on issues related to the Supporting People programme.

Telecommunications Masts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what regulations apply to Network Rail telecommunications masts being used to provide mobile phone telecommunication services for the general public. [20456]

Yvette Cooper: The normal regulations in place throughout England apply, unless exempted by the regulations set out in part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO) as amended by SI 2115/2003.

Traveller Sites

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if his Department will introduce measures allowing local communities to have greater involvement in decisions on where official Traveller sites are placed. [20089]

Yvette Cooper: Councils should involve local communities in the creation of Development Plan Documents. The way in which this will happen will be set out in the Local Planning Authority's Statement of Community Involvement. Interested parties can also comment on individual planning applications and at appeals.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Sales

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been in each of the last five years for selling alcohol to minors. [18845]

Hazel Blears: The available information, relating to sales of alcohol to under-18s in England and Wales from 1999 to 2003, is shown in the table. Data for 2004 will be available in late November. In addition, the Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) scheme was brought into effect in England and Wales during 2003–04 to provide the police with a quick and effective means of dealing with minor offences.

Under the scheme an offender is issued with a fixed penalty notice and has 21 days in which to pay the penalty or request a court hearing. The offence of selling alcohol to persons aged under eighteen years was added to the PND scheme on one November 2004. In England and Wales, 113 PNDs were issued for sale of alcohol to under-18s in 2004, with 280 issued from January to June in 2005.

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences relating to the sale of alcohol to underage persons[1], England and Wales, 1999 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*England and Wales*
Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises	Licensing Act, 1964, Section 169(1): Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act1983, Schedule (Sec. 3) para. 4(1).	1999	204
		2000	130
		2001	155
		2002	168
		2003	604

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences relating to the sale of alcohol to underage persons[1], England and Wales, 1999 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*England and Wales*
Wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18	Licensing Act 1964, Sec.181A(1) as added by Licensing Act 1988, Sec17.	1999	
		2000	2
		2001	3
		2002	2
		2003	12

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Petty sessional area.
[3] Police force area.
Source:
RQS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of antisocial behaviour orders have been breached. [19044]

Hazel Blears: Data on convictions for breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003. Of the 1,892 ASBOs issued during this period, as reported to the Home Office, 42 per cent. of persons (793) breached their ASBO on one or more occasions. Breach data for 2004 will be available towards the end of the year.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to allow the media to publish the *(a)* names and *(b)* photographs of all those upon whom antisocial behaviour orders have been served, whatever their age; and if he will make a statement. [19412]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* Antisocial behaviour orders are not subject to reporting restrictions as they are civil orders. ASBOs are designed to protect local communities and their effectiveness will depend on local people knowing about them—publicity should be expected in most cases.

However, courts retain the right to impose reporting restrictions if they believe it appropriate to do so. Specific guidance on publicising antisocial behaviour orders is available on our website: www.together.gov.uk.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding is expected to be allocated for antisocial behaviour orders in Gravesham in 2005. [20038]

Hazel Blears: We do not allocate any funding for antisocial behaviour orders. Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are obtained from courts on application from local agencies and it is the responsibility of these agencies, in accordance with partnership working arrangements, to meet any associated costs.

Anti-terrorism Legislation

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were detained by the police under anti-terrorism legislation during the *(a)* Labour party conference in Brighton, *(b)* Conservative party conference in Blackpool and *(c)* Liberal Democrats conference in Blackpool. [18987]

Hazel Blears: The only detention power exercised under anti-terrorism legislation at any of the party conferences was the power to detain a person while conducting a search authorised by Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The power to detain a person under this provision relates only to the amount of time reasonably required to conduct a search. Numbers of stops and searches under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 are not collected centrally below police force area level.

Statistics on stop and search are available on the Research, Development and Statistics page of the Home Office website.

The Home Office Statistical Bulletin: 'Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operation of Certain Police Powers under PACE; England andWales,' details stops and searches under the Terrorism Act 2000, broken down by police force over financial years. The bulletin also shows subsequent arrests. The most recently available figures can be found on the Home Office website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html

Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the police have the power to effect an arrest warrant in respect of a person while he is in an aeroplane on a runway at Heathrow. [17120]

Hazel Blears: Under section 17(1)*(a)* of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) a constable may enter and search any premises for the purpose of executing a search warrant of arrest issued in connection with or arising out of criminal proceedings. An aircraft is specified under the meaning of 'premises' through section 23*(a)* of PACE.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Iraqi asylum seekers were receiving section 4 support from the National Asylum Support Service as at 31 July *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2004. [18984]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Information on the number supported under section four for 31 July 2004 is not available. On 31 July 2005 there were 6115[1] nationals of Iraq in receipt of section four support.

[1] All figures are provisional and have been rounded to nearest 5.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of refused asylum seekers who did not make section four declarations in each of the last five years. [20444]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The information requested is not available.

Available information on the number of failed asylum seekers that have been granted section four support is published quarterly. The next publication covering the third quarter of 2005 (July to September) will be available on 22 November on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Bruche Police Training Centre

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what information the Minister of State based his statement in a letter dated 13 July to the hon. Member for Warrington, North that there are currently no immediate plans to close the Bruche Police Training Centre. [16893]

Hazel Blears: Bruche is the property of the Central Police Training and Development Agency (Centrex) and, as such, the decision to sell the site is the responsibility of the Centrex board, based on advice from the Centrex chief executive.

When I wrote to you on 13 July, no decision had been taken to close any Centrex site. Centrex were, however, considering various plans that involved closure of sites. At the Centrex board meeting on 21 July, the decision was taken to close three of Centrex's sites at the end of May 2006 when they cease providing foundation training to the police service.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the process of enabling agencies to comment on the draft regulations required under section 2 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to be completed. [19209]

Hazel Blears: Opportunity to comment on the draft Gating Order regulations made under section two of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 ended on 14 October 2005. Responses are currently being evaluated and the Home Office will consider commencement in light of these comments.

Community Legal Service (Scope) Regulations

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has commissioned on the effects of the Community Legal Service (Scope) Regulations 2004. [19484]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

The asylum legal aid reforms introduced in April 2004, including the withdrawal of funding for the interview stage, were subject to a review in July 2004 by the Secretary of State.

This review included meetings with the Legal Services Commission (LSC), the Law Society and immigration legal practitioners, including representatives of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association and the Legal Aid Practitioners Group. The agreed way forward included consideration of options for providing greater certainty over costs to suppliers without any increase in average cost.

The Government have given a public commitment to evaluate these reforms and work towards this is in hand.

Correspondence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letter of 1 July from the hon. Member for Aylesbury to the Secretary of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate about the case of Mr. A.M., husband of Mrs. F.R. of Aylesbury, case reference LR 1476013470/1. [20372]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 21 October 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 29 July and 26 September regarding Mrs. Basma Rahman, Home Office Reference Number K1149709. [21058]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 24 October 2005.

Crime and Disorder Statistics

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the areas within the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham that have been designated under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [3426]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis tells me that three areas in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham have been designated under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act.

These are the Cleverley Estate in Shepherds Bush from July 2004 to October 2004, Sanford Manor Estate, Cambria Road, Fulham from October 2004 to April 2005 and Sulivan Court, Peterborough Road, Fulham from November 2004 to May 2005.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences of *(a)* violence against the person, *(b)* sexual crime *(c)* robberies, *(d)* burglaries and *(e)* theft of a vehicle were recorded in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. [18706]

Hazel Blears: The Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency comes within the Middlesbrough crime and disorder reduction partnership area. The number of recorded offences for the crimes requested are given in the table.

Recorded crimes in the Middlesbrough crime and disorder reduction partnership area: 2004–05

Offence type	*Number*
Violence against the person	3,653
Sexual offences[1]	373
Robbery	457
Domestic Burglary	1,637
Theft of a motor vehicle	1,634

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Detection Rates

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the percentage detection rate is for crimes committed against *(a)* under 18s, *(b)* 18–24s and *(c)* over 24s as specifically as possible to the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency; [18610]

(2) how many young people under the age of 16 years have been reported missing in each year since 1997 and still not traced in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland. [18704]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Home Office.

Emergency Numbers (Mobile Phones)

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning the proposal to encourage the saving of In Case of Emergency numbers in the address books of mobile phones; and if he will make a statement. [13366]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* Following checks made on correspondence records, we can say that, to the best of my knowledge, I have not received any representations on the saving of In Case of Emergency numbers.

European Refugee Fund

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on expenditure by the European Refugee Fund since September 2000. [20272]

Mr. McNulty: For the first phase of the European Refugee Fund, which ran from 2000 to 2004, the European Commission allocated £146.7 million (€216 million), of which around £22 million was made available to the United Kingdom. Over this period the fund has been allocated to projects representing the three areas set by the European Commission—voluntary returns, reception of asylum-seekers, and refugee integration. All grants must be matched by money from other sources.

The United Kingdom has allocated all the funding received each year, although actual expenditure has in some cases been less than originally estimated. Final expenditure for this period has yet to be released by the European Commission following their scrutiny of reports from the projects.

New rules for the expenditure of the European Refugee Fund came into force this year, following consultation with member states. The subjects for expenditure remain the same but grants may now be made for longer than one year. For 2005, approximately £6 million has been made available to the UK. Bids for grants were sought by the Home Office over the summer, and the successful applicants will be notified shortly.

Extradition Requests

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent requests have been made by foreign governments to the UK Government for extradition of named individuals; what the Government's response was in each case; and from which country each request came. [19450]

Andy Burnham: In the period 1 January-30 September 2005, there were 30 extradition requests to the UK Government in which arrests were made. These figures include requests in which arrests have been made under provisional warrant and full request papers have not yet been received. In order to avoid all risk of prejudice to individuals, to the conduct of cases, or to ongoing investigations, it is not the normal practice to list names of individuals who are the subjects of extradition requests.

Also in order to avoid prejudice to ongoing investigations, we have excluded from the figures any requests which have not yet resulted in arrests. The figures include requests made to Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, they exclude requests made to the Crown Dependencies; and arrests made pursuant to European Arrest Warrants (EAWs), which are not Government-to-Government requests.

The 30 requests came from the following countries:

	Number
Albania	1
Australia	2
Canada	3
Croatia	2
Czech Rep	[1]1
Germany	[1]1
Israel	2
Italy	[1]3
Romania	7
Russian Federation	2
Turkey	1
USA	5

[1] Pre-EAW

To date, out of these requests, five have resulted in persons being returned to requesting states, while three have been discharged at Bow Street magistrates court, one was discharged at Lothian and Borders sheriff court and one was withdrawn before court proceedings. The remaining cases are progressing through the various stages laid down in the Extradition Act 2003.

Historic Sex Abuse Cases

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support is provided for alleged offenders of historic sex abuse during *(a)* the investigation and *(b)* the trial. [20176]

Paul Goggins: Those accused of historic child abuse are afforded the same level of support as those accused of other sexual crimes, including the services of a solicitor and their nominated counsel to advise and guide them through the investigation and trial.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times in the last 10 years media coverage has been assessed to have prejudiced an investigation into historic sex abuse. [20177]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Identity Cards

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the statement of the Under Secretary of State of 19 July 2005, Standing Committee D, column 413, on the Identity Cards Bill, whether all members of staff referred to as being in positions of trust will be subject to full police and security checks. [19314]

Andy Burnham: Staff members involved in the establishment and maintenance of the register as well as those involved in the issue, modification, cancellation or surrender of ID cards will be subject to checks to obtain an appropriate level of Government security clearance that is commensurate with their role.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the total cost of the identity cards scheme. [19754]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the total average annual running costs for issuing passports and ID cards to UK nationals is £584million.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further assessment he has made of the reliability of technology features of the proposed identity card for purposes of validity since the answer given on the validity period on 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 497W. [19869]

Andy Burnham: The answer given to the earlier question, 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 497W, suggested that it may be necessary to replace the cards after five years to ensure their reliability. Since that time we have been able to undertake research into the capabilities of the market, we have held discussions with some card and chip manufacturers, and we have run a card durability survey to ask specific questions of a range of suppliers.

The data gathered from these exercises suggest that it will be sensible to set a requirement that the card will last 10 years under normal use.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the KPMG review of the costing methodology and key cost assumptions of the identity card scheme arrived at the same current best estimate as the Government of the total average annual running costs for issuing passports and identity cards to UK nationals including allowances for contingency, optimism bias and non-recoverable VAT. [19870]

Mr. McNulty: The KPMG review of the costing methodology and key cost assumptions did not create new estimates, but reviewed the assumptions made and the methods used in compiling the existing cost estimates. The review concluded that the methodology used to cost the ID cards proposals is robust and appropriate for this stage of development.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government plans to store high-definition images of *(a)* all and *(b)* some of the biometrics to be used for identity cards. [20652]

Andy Burnham: No firm decisions on the data storage standards for biometrics within the Identity Cards scheme have been taken. It is assumed that the facial image will be stored in a format similar to that recommended by International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for use in Machine-Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) which requires a high resolution image.

It is also assumed that images of the other biometrics will be stored at a sufficient resolution to enable templates (the compact encodings of the essential patterns in iris and fingerprint biometrics which are used by matching algorithms) to be regenerated should the matching technology being used by the Identity Cards scheme be updated or changed.

As the images will not be required for routine matching and may only be used for generating the template on enrolment and subsequent biometric renewal, they could therefore be stored in a separate database which may be managed as an archive.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 907W, on identity cards, whether the estimate referred to of the likely rates of failure includes an analysis of the failure rate of the *(a)* facial, *(b)* fingerprint and *(c)* iris biometric technology. [20868]

Andy Burnham: The answer given to the earlier question focused on the failure of the cards and the chips on the cards, not on the need to re-enrol biometrics which might arise if a person's physiological characteristics change after their biometrics are recorded as part of their enrolment into the Identity Cards scheme.

Illegal Alcohol Sales

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many retailers have been prosecuted in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* Northumbria and *(c)* England and Wales for the illegal sale of alcohol to people under the age of 16 in each of the last 10 years. [17197]

Hazel Blears: Data on prosecutions for sales of alcohol to under-16s is unavailable because the offences concerned relate to under-18s. The available information, relating to sales of alcohol to under-18s in England and Wales, South Tyneside and Northumbria police force area, 1993 to 2003, is shown in the following table. Data for 2004 will be available in late November.

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences relating to the sale of alcohol to underage persons[1] South Tyneside, Northumbria and England and Wales, 1993 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*South Tyneside PSA[2]*	*Northumbria PFA[3]*	*England and Wales*
Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises	Licensing Act, 1964, Section 169(1); Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983, Schedule (Sec. 3) para. 4(1).	1993	—	7	156
		1994	1	9	137
		1995	—	4	198
		1996	1	19	251
		1997	2	34	214
		1998	4	92	310
		1999	1	41	204
		2000	—	17	130
		2001	—	17	155
		2002	—	8	168
		2003	—	38	604
Wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18	Licensing Act 1964, Sec.181A(1) as added by Licensing Act 1988, Sec17.	1993	—	—	—
		1994	—	—	1
		1995	—	—	
		1996	—	—	
		1997	—	—	1
		1998	—	—	1
		1999	—	—	1
		2000	—	—	2
		2001	—	—	3
		2002	—	—	2
		2003	—	—	12

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Petty Sessional area.
[3] Police force area.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Micro-bikes

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward legislation to enable the police to destroy micro-bikes seized under the Police Reform Act 2002 for use in an antisocial manner. [19335]

Hazel Blears: Once a vehicle has been seized, under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, the police must serve a notice on the vehicle's owner as soon as possible.

This requires the owner to pay a charge for removal and storage in order to reclaim the vehicle, unless he can prove that its antisocial usage had been without his knowledge and consent and that he could not reasonably have prevented it. The police can dispose in any appropriate manner of a vehicle that is unclaimed.

National Identity Register

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of having 13 items of biometric data for each person on the National Identity Register on the *(a)* estimated size of the database and *(b)* management of the data. [19892]

Andy Burnham: The algorithms which will be used to generate biometric templates have not been decided upon, nor have the standards to which the biometric images will be stored. However, based on currently available technology, the templates which will be used might be expected to take up a few 10's of Kilobytes per person and will therefore form the bulk of the data in the main part of the National Identity Register (NIR) but will not make the database so large as to be unmanageable.

The biometric images—that is the raw image data from which the templates are generated—will be substantially larger but will not be required for routine matching and may only be used for generating the template on enrolment and subsequent biometric renewal. They could therefore be stored in a separate database which may be managed as an archive.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer the question from the hon. Member for Portsmouth South, dated 19 May, reference 330. [15865]

Paul Goggins: I replied to the hon. Member on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 40W.

Passports

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment the Government have made of the impact on the Government's current best estimate of the total average annual running costs for issuing passports and identity cards to UK nationals, including allowances for contingency, optimism bias, and non-recoverable VAT, of *(a)* extending the sensitivity analysis, *(b)* revisiting the process for estimating contingency and *(c)* revisiting cost assumptions in line with the recommendations of the KPMG review of the costing methodology and key cost assumptions of the identity card scheme. [19871]

Mr. McNulty: The current best estimate for the total average running costs for issuing passports and ID cards to UK nationals is £584 million, at 2005–06 prices and including allowances for contingency, optimism bias and non-recoverable VAT. My officials are reviewing the recommendations of the KPMG review and will be acting on them in future iterations of the costings.

Police

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for the amalgamation of police forces in England and Wales. [19060]

Hazel Blears: The Home Secretary has asked police forces and authorities to develop options for force restructuring over the next three months and to submit their final reports including their preferred options to the Home Office by 23 December. The timetable for implementation remains to be decided but the intention is to have the new structures in place by 2008.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police cells are in use in Bournemouth; and if he will make a statement. [17079]

Hazel Blears: This is an operational matter for the chief constable of Dorset Police but I understand that there are 14 cells and four detention rooms at Bournemouth police station; and that there are plans to build a new 30 cell custody block at Bournemouth Divisional HQ.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements for parliamentary scrutiny he plans for the proposals for restructuring of police forces; and to what timetable. [18667]

Hazel Blears: Sections 32 to 34 of the Police Act 1996 make provision for the alteration of police force areas in England and Wales (other than the City of London police area) by secondary legislation. Under these provisions the Secretary of State may make an order either if he has received a request to make alterations from the police authorities for each of the areas affected by them (in which case the negative resolution procedure applies), or if it appears to him that it is expedient to make the alterations in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness (in which case the affirmative procedure applies). Police authorities and forces have been asked to submit their proposals for restructuring by 23 December 2005. My right hon. friend Home Secretary will make a further announcement on the way forward once these submissions have been considered.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that no police force will *(a)* suffer a reduced budget and *(b)* be required to reduce the number of police, community support officers or non-uniformed staff it employs under the new funding formula for the police service. [18766]

Hazel Blears: It is the responsibility of each police authority to set a budget each year, taking into account local circumstances and resources at its disposal. Our commitment is that by 2008 every area in England and Wales will benefit from neighbourhood policing, supported by the neighbourhood policing fund. We will provide continued investment, including provision for 24,000 community support officers by 2008.

The provisional police grant settlement announcements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be made in late November/early December. For the first time, authorities will be able to plan realistically for service provision, knowing their grant for the coming two years rather than one.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with chief constables on the restructuring of police forces; what terms of reference he has given to *(a)* chief constables and *(b)* police authorities in relation to the consultation on restructuring; and if he will make a statement. [19091]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The Home Secretary outlined the need for force restructuring as recommended in HMIC's report "Closing the Gap" to all chief officers and chairs of police authorities on 19 September.

My right hon. Friend then wrote to all chief officers and chairs of police authorities in England and Wales on 22 September to set out his views on the development of options for force restructuring. To support the development of proposals for change, a toolkit and guidance to help forces with evaluating options has been sent to all forces and authorities.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department issues to police forces on regular health and fitness tests for police motorcycle riders; and if he will make a statement. [13364]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The Home Office has not issued guidance on health and fitness tests for police motorcycle riders. It is the responsibility of forces under health and safety legislation to ensure that risk assessments for the physical and medical requirements of specialist police roles and posts are undertaken.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was paid out by the Metropolitan Police in rewards for information relating to crimes in each year since 1997. [15281]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis is responsible for the operational management of, and allocation of funding by, the force. I will ensure that he receives a copy of the question and replies to you directly in response to your concerns.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the letter of 3 August from the Minister of State to the hon. Member for Warrington, North, on what information she based her statement that Centrex had not timed its announcement of the closure of police training centres to avoid parliamentary scrutiny. [19661]

Hazel Blears: Centrex were not in a position to announce that decision before Parliament rose. The decision was not timed to avoid parliamentary scrutiny.

Home Office officials attended the Centrex board meeting scheduled for 21 July and agreed the timing of the decision and its announcement at this meeting.

It would not have been possible to make an announcement before the board had made a decision. Given that this affects people's jobs it would have been unacceptable to delay the announcement until after parliamentary recess.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the letter from the Minister of State to the hon. Member for Warrington, North of 3 August, if he will make it his policy to ensure that announcements about closures of police training centres are made when the House is sitting. [19662]

Hazel Blears: I agree that while every effort should be made for announcements of this sort to take place at a time when Parliament can raise questions about them, closure of these sites is the responsibility of Centrex and parliamentary timing should not be the only consideration.

Psychics

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police authorities have used the services of a psychic; and at what cost; and if he will make a statement. [4610]

Hazel Blears: The use of psychics by police forces is an operational matter for individual chief officers. Information on their use is not collected centrally.

Retina Identification

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1786W, in what proportion of iris identification checks a misidentification or other error is expected for those who *(a)* wear and *(b)* do not wear contact lenses. [19235]

Andy Burnham: Reports ("Independent Testing of Biometric Technology, Final Report" International Biometrics Group, May 2005) of recent iris recognition trials with a mix of contact lens wearers and non-contact lens wearers have demonstrated a recognition accuracy of 99.4 per cent. with a 0.00129 per cent. chance of an impostor being misidentified as another person.

The effects of wearing contact lenses will be quantified in tests scheduled for next year, however we believe that most contact lens wearers will have no difficulty using iris recognition.

Sexual Offences Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2219W, on the Sexual Offences Act, if he will publish such data as he has broken down by constabulary. [18862]

Paul Goggins: Further to the answer given on 21 July, the recorded crime data in relation to section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 by police force area are given in the following table.

Recorded crime of sexual grooming by police force area May 2004 to March 2005

	Number
Avon and Somerset	12
Bedfordshire	2
Cambridgeshire	6
Cheshire	0
Cleveland	1
Cumbria	0
Derbyshire	2
Devon and Cornwall	8
Dorset	2
Durham	0
Dyfed-Powys	0
Essex	4
Gloucestershire	5
Greater Manchester	11
Gwent	1
Hampshire	18
Hertfordshire	0
Humberside	12
Kent	4
Lancashire	4
Leicestershire	12
Lincolnshire	3
London, City of	1
Merseyside	5
Metropolitan Police	18
Norfolk	4
Northamptonshire	2
Northumbria	4
North Wales	6
North Yorkshire	1
Nottinghamshire	1
South Wales	1
South Yorkshire	2
Staffordshire	5
Suffolk	0
Surrey	0
Sussex	2
Thames Valley	10
Warwickshire	0
West Mercia	4
West Midlands	5
West Yorkshire	4
Wiltshire	3
Total	185

Street Drinking (Wales)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures have been introduced to reduce street drinking in Wales since 1997. [8845]

Hazel Blears: The Government take the problem of street drinking and antisocial behaviour very seriously. That is why we introduced local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the Anti-social Behaviour Act in 2003—both of which cover England and Wales.

Measures introduced to help reduce street drinking in Wales from 1997 include the "Lions Breath" project and the Targeting Alcohol Related Street Crime (TASC) initiative in Cardiff, the "Calling time on Violent Crime" initiative in Swansea and the national Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns which took place over the summer and Christmas period last year.

The Violent Crime Reduction Bill, which is currently before Parliament and covers England and Wales, includes further measures like alcohol disorder zones, drinking banning orders and dispersal powers which may also have an impact on street drinking.

Student Visas (Deportations)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been deported after attempting to procure a student visa in the last 10 years. [20078]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not available, and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Statistics on the number of persons deported from the UK are published in the Control of Immigration Statistics Command Paper on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Telecommunications Mast

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date the Tetra telecommunications mast in Haverfordwest was activated. [483]

Hazel Blears: The operation of Airwave masts is a matter for O2 Airwave, the network provider.

Travellers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on dealing with Travellers who are deemed to be staying on illegal sites. [19386]

Yvette Cooper: The joint Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)/Home Office document, "Guidance on Managing Unauthorised Camping" provides comprehensive advice to local authorities, the police and other landowners on dealing with unauthorised encampments. This document can be found on the ODPM website at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_027535.hcsp

Where Travellers are occupying sites without planning permission local authorities have a range of discretionary enforcement powers available to them.

Zimbabwe

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many officials from his Department visited Zimbabwe during the summer to report on conditions for returned failed asylum seekers; [19793]

(2) whether officials from his Department met representatives of the Zimbabwean Government when they visited Zimbabwe in the summer; [19794]

(3) if he will place in the Library a copy of the report prepared by officials from his Department following their visit to Zimbabwe in the summer. [19795]

Mr. McNulty: A team of three Home Office and two Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials visited Harare between 4 and 10 September. The team was concerned with the issue of failed asylum seekers returned to Zimbabwe from the UK. The team met a broad range of non-governmental organisations and representatives of civil society.

A visit was paid to the Zimbabwean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Zimbabwean Immigration Service, in both cases these were courtesy visits which did not form part of the substantive work of the team. Due to the political climate in Zimbabwe, the meetings with some of the sources were conducted on the basis that their identities would not be revealed except in relation to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) proceedings. The AIT decided to make an order under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 by which those sources which had requested anonymity were protected, and accordingly the team's summary of their evidence was not made public. However, the team's evidence is noted in detail in the determination of the AIT, which can be viewed on the AIT website at: http://www.ait.gov.uk/determinations.do

NORTHERN IRELAND

Illegal Fuel

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been charged in relation to the operation of illegal fuel laundering plants within Northern Ireland in the last three years. [20604]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The number of people charged related to hydrocarbon oils fraud in Northern Ireland during the last three years are as set out in the following table.

	Number of people charged
2001–02	7
2002–03	5
2003–04	6

The figures relate to charges for all types of hydrocarbon oils fraud.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many petrol filling station owners have been convicted of selling illegally laundered fuel in Northern Ireland in the last three years; [20605]

(2) how many petrol filling station owners have been convicted of selling smuggled fuel in Northern Ireland in the last three years. [20606]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The number of convictions secured which are related to hydrocarbon oils fraud in Northern Ireland during the last three years are as set out in the table.

	Number of convictions
2001–02	15
2002–03	3
2003–04	4

The figures relate to convictions for all types of hydrocarbon oils fraud.

Figures for 2004–05 will be published in HMRC's Annual Report 2004–05.

Tax Credit Inquiries

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will re-introduce personnel in the Regional Inland Revenue Office in Belfast who would be available to meet interested parties such as public representatives and recognised advisory services in Northern Ireland in order to tackle complex problems associated with tax credit inquiries. [17128]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Hon. Members, Members of the Legislative Assembly and recognised advisory services in Northern Ireland have access to dedicated helplines that deal with their tax credits queries. HM Revenue and Customs considers all requests to meet with public representatives and recognised advisory services and, where appropriate, meetings do take place.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of provision of publicly-funded advice for asylum seekers in Swindon; and what steps are being taken by the Legal Services Commission to ensure adequate legal advice for asylum seekers in the Swindon area. [20307]

Bridget Prentice: In order to ensure adequate access to legal advice for asylum seekers in the Swindon area, the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS), a national provider of immigration and asylum legal services, runs a 'surgery' every Monday at Swindon citizens advice bureau.

The Legal Services Commission (LSC) believes that this is currently sufficient to meet demand in the area. The LSC regularly monitors the supply of immigration advice and would increase provision or the allocation of new matter starts available to suppliers if this seemed necessary to cope with demand.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17994]

Bridget Prentice: It is policy in my Department to operate official vehicles using only new (as opposed to retreaded) tyres. None of the vehicles brought onto the Department's fleet prior to 1 April 2005 are currently fitted with retreaded tyres. Similarly none of the new vehicles brought onto the fleet since to 1 April 2005 are currently fitted with retreaded tyres.

On 1 April 2005, following the implementation of the Courts Act 2003, the Department became responsible for vehicles owned or leased by the 41 former magistrates courts committees, and the GLMCA, in England and Wales. The information required to answer the question in respect of these vehicles is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles provided to the Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the chief executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 and UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

Human Rights

David Taylor: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent submissions the Department has received in support of the revision of human rights legislation. [19490]

Ms Harman: The Department receives a moderate volume of public correspondence about the Human Rights Act representing all shades of opinion from strong support to calls for its repeal.

Judicial Appointments

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* High Court judges, *(b)* county court judges, *(c)* masters, *(d)* magistrates and *(e)* occupants of other judicial positions have been appointed in each year since 1997; and what the perceived community background was of each of the persons appointed. [18894]

Bridget Prentice: Statistics on judicial appointments are collated by business years (April to March). Since 1997, there were 53 full-time judicial appointments made in Northern Ireland. In addition 272 lay magistrates were appointed in April 2005. Details of the full-time appointments are given as follows:

Judicial appointments 1997–98 to present

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005 to date*
Lord Chief Justice	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Lord Justice of Appeal	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
High Court Judge	1	1	1	—	1	—	—	3	—
County Court Judge	—	3	—	1	1	—	1	4	1
Resident Magistrate	2	3	1	2	1	—	2	—	2
District Judge	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Master of the High Court	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	1	2

Judicial appointments 1997–98 to present

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005 to date
Chief Social Security and Child Support Commissioner	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Official Solicitor	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	6	11	2	4	4	0	4	9	5

Equity monitoring information, including community background, on applicants for judicial appointment was not collected prior to 2004. Publication of such information for individuals appointed after that date would be a contravention of the principles of fair employment monitoring.

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's policy is on the minimum legal qualifications necessary for a judicial appointment; and if she will make a statement. [21676]

Bridget Prentice: The eligibility requirements for judicial appointments are set down in statute. They vary according to the judicial office concerned, but in general they provide that before being considered for judicial appointment, an individual must have possessed specified rights of audience before the courts for a specified length of time. My right hon. and Noble Friend the Lord Chancellor announced in July this year that as part of the programme of work to increase the diversity of the judiciary, the Government would legislate when time permitted to change the current statutory requirements. Specifically, suitably qualified legal executives, patent agents and trade mark attorneys would become eligible for some appointments, and the requirement for rights of audience would be replaced with a requirement for a specified (and reduced) number of years post qualification legal experience. I would refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement I made on 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 25–27WS.

Legal Services Board

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the remit of the Legal Services Board will be; and when it will commence operations. [21129]

Bridget Prentice: The Government published a White Paper on 17 October 2005 setting out proposals for the future of legal services in England and Wales. The reforms will put the needs of consumers first in the provision of legal services.

The Government will establish a regulator, the Legal Services Board (LSB), to provide oversight regulation of reserved legal services in England and Wales. It will be independent of Government and providers of legal services. The LSB will authorise Front Line Regulators, such as the Bar Council and Law Society, to carry out day to day regulation, if they meet its high standards. The LSB will have powers to act if Front Line Regulators fail. This will include the power to set regulatory targets, impose fines and to modify or remove the authorisation of a Front Line Regulator if it fails, and to carry out regulatory functions itself in those circumstances.

There will be clear statutory objectives and principles, which will apply to the Legal Services Board, Front Line Regulators and the new Office for Legal Complaints. The objectives will be to: support the rule of law; improve access to justice; protect and promote consumers' interests; promote competition; encourage a strong and effective legal profession; to increase public understanding of the citizen's legal rights and maintain the principles of those providing legal services. The principles are independence, integrity, the duty to act in the best interest of the client, and client confidentiality.

The Government will publish a Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny in the current Session of Parliament. Legislation will be introduced after that as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Marked Electoral Registers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 38W, on marked registers, whether VAT is payable on the charges listed. [17466]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

I understand that VAT is currently being charged on the fees payable for accessing marked registers. HMRC are currently discussing the matter with the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many volunteering positions her Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17867]

Bridget Prentice: The main routes through which my Department has the greatest contact with the voluntary and community sector are through the appointment of magistrates and via the DCA's main non-departmental public body, the Legal Services Commission and their role in administering legal aid. In terms of annual appointments, 1,766 magistrates were appointed year ending March 2005. In the previous years the appointments were 1,768 (2004), 1,623 (2003), 1,447 (2002), 1,618 (2001).

My Department and the Legal Services Commission jointly provide funding of £200,000 p.a. to the LawWorks volunteering project. In its first three-year phase the project created over 2,000 volunteering opportunities in law clinics, provided training sessions in key areas of law for those volunteering and developed on line advice provision.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 26 October 2005

TREASURY

Counterfeit Cigarettes

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the volume of counterfeit cigarettes being sold on the UK black market. [21861]

John Healey: HMRC's latest estimate of the size of the UK counterfeit cigarette market is contained in "Counterfeit Cigarettes 2004", which is published on the HM Treasury website.

Economic Life Cycle Cost Analyses

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what areas his Department has since 1 January 2004 *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* begun to undertake full economic life cycle cost analyses. [21884]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Economic appraisals and evaluations of central government policies, programmes and projects, as required by the HM Treasury Green Book guidance, involve analysis of the costs and benefits of policies over time. These are conducted by Departments responsible for front-line public services. The Treasury has not undertaken, or begun to undertake, any of these since January 2004.

Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) for new policies always include a cost-benefit analysis. A list of full RIAs produced by HM Treasury from 1 January 2001 is available on the HMT website. HM Revenue and Customs publish RIAs for Budget measures on their website.

Equitable Life

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Services Authority regarding Equitable Life; and if he will make a statement. [21868]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My officials are in touch with the Financial Services Authority for the purposes of co-operating with the parliamentary ombudsman's investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21293]

Mr. Des Browne: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the Spring Departmental Report. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Report and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21322]

Mr. Des Browne: The Finance Director for HMRC, who is a member of the Department's Executive Committee, is the appointed Senior Responsible Officer responsible for the overall delivery of the department's Efficiency programme.

Gold Sales

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the proceeds of gold sales from the UK reserves have been in each year since 1997; and if he will estimate the value of that gold at today's prices. [20264]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: 395 tonnes of gold were sold from the reserves between July 1999 and March 2002. The proceeds in dollars, and further details, can be found on page 27 of "Review of the sale of part of the UK gold reserves" published by the Treasury in October 2002 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//9EFEF/Gold Reserves.PDF).

At closing market prices on 19 October, the total value of this gold would be approximately £3,358 million.

The programme was part of a prudent restructuring of the foreign currency and gold reserves aimed at achieving a better-balanced portfolio. As a result of the programme a one-off reduction in risk of approximately 30 per cent. was achieved (as measured by Value-at-Risk).

The proceeds from the sales were reinvested in interest bearing foreign currency assets in broadly the same proportions as the foreign currency assets held in the net reserves (40 per cent. dollars; 40 per cent. euros; and 20 per cent. yen) and these have earned returns over this period.

It would be inappropriate to measure gains or losses resulting from fluctuations in market values over a short-term period.

Government Efficiency

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how regularly he assesses each Department's performance against *(a)* the efficiency saving targets set out within departmental efficiency technical notes and *(b)* each public service agreement target and associated indicators; [21864]

(2) how many reports he has received from the Efficiency Unit with regard to each Department's performance against efficiency savings targets as set out in its efficiency technical notes; and if he will publish them. [21870]

Mr. Des Browne: Progress against the efficiency targets was reported in Budget 2005. John Oughton, chief executive of the Office of Government Commerce,

provides half-yearly reports to the Prime Minister and Chancellor on progress against the efficiency targets. Two such reports have been made to date. These reports will not be published, but departments will publicly report progress in their autumn performance reports.

Departments report on progress against their PSA targets twice-yearly, in their spring departmental reports and autumn performance reports.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many incidents of slippage against departmental efficiency savings, as forecast in efficiency technical notes, have been reported to the Treasury, broken down by Department. [21865]

Mr. Des Browne: Budget 2005 reported that the Government are ahead of schedule in meeting the target of £20 billion efficiency gains. Departments will report progress towards their efficiency targets, as forecast in efficiency technical notes, in their autumn performance reports.

National Minimum Wage

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many investigations have been undertaken by HM Revenue and Customs following complaints relating to the national minimum wage in each of the last five years in *(a)* total and *(b)* the (i) hotel, (ii) retail, (iii) care-home, (iv) security and (v) hairdressing sectors; in how many there has been evidence of non-compliance in each case; and how many penalty payments have been awarded; [21659]

(2) how many complaints have been made by workers in the *(a)* hotel, *(b)* retail, *(c)* care home, *(d)* security and *(e)* hairdressing sectors in respect of alleged breaches of national minimum wage rules in each of the last five years. [21660]

Dawn Primarolo: Sector details are recorded for investigation cases closed during the year. HMRC records details for hotels within the category of hospitality and for care homes within the social care category. Details for security are recorded within the category of security and cleaning. The details held for cases closed for the categories most closely relating to the sectors specified are shown in the following table.

Details by sector of the number of cases where non-compliance was identified and details of the number of penalty notices issued per sector are not available. To provide these statistics would require a disproportionate amount of time and other resource. However, the figures that are provided in the following table show the total number of complaint cases closed in the year where arrears were identified. Also, the total number of penalty notices issued for all complaint cases is shown for each year.

Number of investigations by sector closed by HMRC that were initiated by a complaint about possible non-payment of the minimum wage.

	Retail	*Hospitality*	*Hairdressing*	*Security and cleaning*	*Social care*	*Other sectors*	*Total*
2000–01	261	280	152	97	103	850	1743
2001–02	208	260	128	78	87	959	1720
2002–03	304	283	155	65	120	1026	1953
2003–04	241	308	185	70	185	897	1886
2004–05	270	315	192	86	107	981	1951

Number of investigations closed by HMRC that were initiated by a complaint about possible non-payment of the minimum wage, and where non-compliance was identified.

	Number
2000–01	1209
2001–02	904
2002–03	991
2003–04	992
2004–05	1014

Number of investigations closed by HMRC that were initiated by a complaint about possible non-payment of the minimum wage, and where penalty notices were issued during the investigation.

	Number of penalty notices issued
2000–01	[1]
2001–02	20
2002–03	18
2003–04	10
2004–05	10

[1] Not known

Sustainable Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he plans to publish the next departmental sustainable action plan. [21997]

John Healey: The Treasury's next action plan will be published as soon as possible after it has been finalised.

Tax Credits

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by what date he expects all on-going disputes about tax credit awards and the recovery of overpayments to be resolved. [13702]

Dawn Primarolo: I announced at the hearing of the Treasury Sub-committee earlier today that from next month, subject to final testing of the procedures by HMRC, where a claimant disputes the recovery of an overpayment action will be taken to prevent automatic recovery of any outstanding amount owed, until the TCO has looked into the case and made a decision. This will apply both to the cases on hand and to new cases going forward.

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many suspensions of recovery of overpayments where the overpayment is in dispute have taken place since January. [19136]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 723W.

From next month, subject to final testing of the procedures by HMRC, where a claimant disputes the recovery of an overpayment action will be taken to prevent automatic recovery of any outstanding amount owed, until the TCO has looked into the case and made a decision. This will apply both to the cases on hand and to new cases going forward.

Tax Liabilities

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people over state pension age have requested an estimate of their tax liability for 2006–07. [18628]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC do not provide people with estimates of their tax liability for the coming year.

Tobacco Taxation

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the level of UK tobacco taxation on the volume of cigarette smuggling into the UK. [21863]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs and LSE academics have developed a new economic model of the tobacco market, designed to take full account of the complexities of the modern tobacco market, including the impact of smuggling. The model is published in GES Working Paper No 150 "The Demand for Tobacco Products in the UK" December 2004 and is available on HMRC's website.

WALES

Green Ministers

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what *(a)* work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in the last three months and *(b)* meetings that Minister has attended in the last 12 months in his official capacity within that role. [18131]

Nick Ainger: I take very seriously my role of ensuring that the Wales Office takes full account of sustainability issues in all aspects of its work.

On 20 July I spoke at the launch of National Parks Week, referring particularly to the sustainable tourism strategy being developed by the three National Park Authorities together with other partners. Because of its cross-cutting nature, sustainable development is a consideration in most meetings which I attend.

I am a member of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in Government (EE(SD)). Although the Government publishes the title, membership and terms of reference of cabinet committees, it has been the practice of successive Governments not to disclose details of their proceedings.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the meetings his Department has been present at regarding the delivery of sustainable development across Government as coordinated by the Ministerial Sub-committee of Green Ministers. [18132]

Nick Ainger: Following the General Election in May, the Cabinet Sub-Committee of Green Ministers (ENV(G)) was replaced by the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in Government (EE(SD)) whose members are departmental Sustainable Development Ministers.

Although the Government publishes the title, membership and terms of reference of cabinet committees, it has been the practice of successive governments not to disclose details of their proceedings.

Richard Commission

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set a timetable for the implementation of those parts of the Richard Commission Report on powers of the National Assembly for Wales that he intends to implement. [20976]

Mr. Hain: The Government's proposals are contained in the White Paper "Better Governance for Wales" which I published on 15 June.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the rates of employee absence in her Department have been in each year since 1997. [21024]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp

The Department is fully committed to the management of sickness absence and introduced a new Sickness Absence Management policy on 1 December 2004, which included many of the best practices contained in the Report of the Joint Review by the Ministerial task Force for Health, Safety and Productivity and the Cabinet Office 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector' (November 2004), such as;

Welcome back discussions between line managers and staff returning from sickness absence, on each occasion of absence.

Prompts for action sent to managers when staff have accumulated 15 and 30 days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period.

Dedicated Human Resource professional advice to managers of sickness absence cases.

Occupational Health referral options for managers who are concerned over the performance of their staff.

Defra is supporting the recommendations made in the 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector' report, by taking part in a trial of more sensitive arrangements for the use of special/compassionate leave.

Flooding

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Environment Agency's flood risk maps indicate areas *(a)* of known flood risk, *(b)* of potential risk and *(c)* where further study is required. [20326]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency's Flood Map on the Internet illustrates the areas that could flood in a 1 per cent. (1 in 100) annual probability of flood from rivers and a 0.5 per cent. (1 in 200) probability flood from the sea. This is consistent with the requirements of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Planning Policy Guidance note 25 on Development and Flood Risk. Hence, the flood map shows both areas of known flood risk and potential risk. While it does not identify where further study is required the flood risk maps are subject to a programme of update and refinement. Areas that have previously flooded are shown on a separate historic flood map held by the Environment Agency.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of *(a)* the number of (i) homes and (ii) businesses and *(b)* land allocated for development at risk from flooding in the East Riding of Yorkshire. [20329]

Mr. Morley: For part *(a)* the Environment Agency's assessment is based on those properties found within the Extreme Flood Outline. This is an area with an annual probability of flooding of 0.1 per cent. (or 1 in 1,000 year chance of flooding). The Environment Agency defines the extent of the natural floodplain as if there were no flood defences or manmade structures in place.

"East Riding of Yorkshire" has been taken to cover the areas of East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston-Upon-Hull local authorities. There are 146,800 homes and 8,350 businesses. Planning Policy Guidance Note 25, Development and Flood Risk (PPG 25) recommends that when drawing up or revising development plans, local authorities should give priority in allocating sites for development in descending order of flood risk (known as the 'sequential test').

To make these decisions as well informed as possible, the Environment Agency encourages local authorities to carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. This assesses flood risk across the whole local authority area, rather than for an individual development, and enables local planning authorities to understand spatial variations in flood risk. Future development proposals can then be assessed in line with the 'sequential test'.

Both the East Riding of Yorkshire and the City of Hull councils have begun to develop a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and have been in initial consultation with the Environment Agency.

In the meantime the Environment Agency is providing them with advice and information to assist the process, and continuing to comment on land allocations and individual planning applications in respect of flood risk, through their role as a planning consultee.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on the *(a)* access to and *(b)* cost of insurance for people living in areas designated as at risk from flooding, with particular reference to Beverley and Holderness. [20330]

Mr. Morley: The Government continues to work with the insurance industry with a mutual aim of continuing affordable domestic flood cover into the future.

The insurance industry is a competitive and commercial one and makes decisions based on risk, indications from the Association of British Insurers suggest that flood insurance cover remains broadly available to households in areas at risk of flooding, in accordance with their Statement of Principles on this. Premium charges are a matter for individual insurers.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the financial impact on property-owners of flood risk designation in *(a)* England and *(b)* the East Riding of Yorkshire since the latest flood maps were published. [20362]

Mr. Morley: We have not carried out any such formal assessment. Flood risk mapping is an important part of the Government's strategy on public awareness, to ensure that the risk from flooding is better understood by all concerned. It is important that people living and working in the floodplains should know about the probabilities of flooding so they can take informed decisions about precautionary action. Similarly those responsible for development planning decisions and emergency planning also need this information.

Royal Commission on Environmental Protection Report

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will carry out an investigation into whether a member of her Department leaked a copy of the recent report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Protection. [21153]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has no plans to carry out an investigation into whether anyone from Government leaked a copy of the recent report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Protection (RCEP). The RCEP is an independent body and, as such, it is for them to decide how best to deal with the leak.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are planned to improve the environmental performance of products and services within the framework of the Government's sustainable development strategy with particular reference to improved product design. [21507]

Mr. Morley: In the Sustainable Development Strategy, published in March, the Government stated its commitment to establish a new Sustainable Design

Forum, that will bring together Government, business and the design community to explore and promote ways to embed sustainability in products and design thinking.

Since then Defra and DTI have been closely involved in developing proposals for the Sustainable Design Forum, as members of a Steering Group that includes representatives from the Design Council, the RSA, Forum for the Future and the Design Business Association. An interim consultants' report on the Forum's possible structure and terms of reference was presented to the Steering Group and published on the Design Council website in July.

Currently, the Steering Group is working with the consultants in refining these proposals and agreeing the way forward, with a view to establishing the Sustainable Design Forum early in the new year.

The adoption of the Framework Directive for the Eco-design of Energy Using Products (EUP) on 6 July this year will provide a streamlined and effective route for setting EU-wide environmental requirements for traded goods. The UK, via the Government's Market Transformation Programme, will work proactively with the Commission and other member states to influence and speed the delivery of measures under EUP.

Thames Gateway

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to ensure that private landowners in the Thames Gateway maintain effective flood defences within their property. [21068]

Mr. Morley: Responsibility for maintaining flood defences rests primarily with individual property owners. However the Environment Agency has a general supervisory duty related to flood defence and can in some circumstances use default powers to maintain and repair such defences.

As part of a new strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England the Government are looking at ways in which we can encourage individual property owners to adopt measures to improve resilience and resistance to flooding.

In respect of new developments in the Thames Gateway, planning authorities will be guided by the advice contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 on development and flood risk, which provides that current and future flood risk should be taken into account when making planning decisions. The Government plan to consult soon on a revised version of this guidance which will strengthen and clarify how planning authorities should take account of flood risk.

Water Affordability

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress of the establishment of a pilot scheme in the south-west on water affordability. [19634]

Mr. Morley: The south-west affordability pilot study will assess the combined effect of benefits checks, water efficiency measures and metering on low income households. It will target, and assess the effectiveness of, water affordability assistance to lower income households in the south-west region.

The invitations to tender for the south-west pilot study were issued on 8 September. On 11 October we received tenders for the contracts being let for the pilot study. I understand that the timetable, at present, would see the contracts let in October and that the pilot study should be running by early next year.

DEFENCE

Adjutant-General's Office

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any arrests have been made following the reports of fraud at the Adjutant-General's office; and if he will make a statement. [20880]

Mr. Touhig: No arrests have been made, but in order to avoid prejudice to an ongoing police investigation I am unable to comment further.

Airbus A400M

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the delivery schedule for the Airbus A400M; and what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* payment terms per unit are. [19437]

Mr. Ingram: The in-service date of the A400M (defined as acceptance into service of the seventh aircraft) is 2011. We expect delivery of the final (25th) aircraft in 2015. I am withholding the unit costs, as this information is commercially sensitive. There are five stage payments per aircraft.

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the limitations of the Automatic Flight Control System fitted to Chinook ZA721, which crashed on 27 February 1987, applied to the Chinook HC2 on its introduction to service. [20790]

Mr. Touhig: It has not been possible to locate a copy of the documentation relating to the Chinook HC1 that would have been in force in February 1987. However, the limitations on the Automatic Flight Control System on the Chinook HC 2 on introduction to service were the same as those that were in force in July 1987, with one exception. On the HC1 the Radar altitude hold was not cleared for use, the HC2 release to service did permit use of the Radar Altimeter hold, for

> " . . . use in hovering and low airspeed manoeuvres only, at heights between 75 and 1500ft Above Ground Level. The use of this mode when carrying under slung loads is prohibited."

Air-to-air Refuelling Tankers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long the existing air-to-air refuelling tankers will remain in service; and what the fuel carrying capacity of the tankers is. [19544]

Mr. Ingram: The current RAF air-to-air refuelling fleet is made up of Tristar and VC10 aircraft. On current plans these aircraft will all reach their out-of-service dates towards the middle of the next decade.

The fuel carrying capacity of these aircraft is as follows:

Aircraft	*KG*
Tristar K1/KC1	131,000
VC10 C1K	70,420
VC10 K3	83,680
VC10 K4	70,390

These figures include fuel used to fly the tanker aircraft.

Armed Forces Deployment

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members, and what percentage, of the Territorial Army are available to be deployed. [17661]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 September 2005 some 12,000 members of the Territorial Army (TA) were available to be deployed, representing 34 percent. of the total strength.

The right hon. and learned Member will note that the figure of 12,000 is reached by the exclusion of (among others) personnel who:

have not completed their mandatory training and/or are in the process of being discharged (approximately 11, 500 personnel)

are currently mobilised and deployed and/or have exceeded the statutory limits on mobilised service (Section 54 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 limits mobilisation to a total of 12 months in every 36) (approximately 8,100 personnel)

are members of the University Officer Training Corps (approximately 4,000 personnel)

Brucella Bacteria

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a release of material contaminated by brucella viruses has occurred at his Department's facilities over the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [21550]

Mr. Touhig: There has been no release of any material contaminated with the brucella bacteria at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory facilities in the last five years.

Defence Export Services Organisation

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff are employed by the Defence Export Services Organisation in the UK, broken down by job title. [19474]

Mr. Ingram: On 1 April 2005, the Defence Export Services Organisation had 375 United Kingdom based staff in post. This total comprised:

	Number of staff
Senior Team and Support Staff	7.5
Regional Directorates (including Military Advisers)	83
Market Analysis	8.5
Business Support	18
Export Support Team (equipment demonstration)	46
Project Offices	124
Communications and Events (including Exhibitions and Inward Visits)	28
Export Licensing Advice and Secretariat	33
Resource Management	27
Total	375

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the overseas offices of the Defence Export Services Organisation are situated; when each office was established; how many staff are employed in each; and what the cost of each *(a)* was for 2004–05 and *(b)* is projected to be for 2005–06. [19475]

Mr. Ingram: Defence Supply Secretaries employed by the Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) have offices in the countries listed in the table. DESO staff are also employed in support of specific defence export projects in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and their numbers are shown in the table; the costs of those offices are met by the customer government, and I am withholding the information as its release would be likely to prejudice relations with those governments.

Defence Supply Secretary Office	*Date established*	*Staff*	*2004–05 cost (£000)*	*Estimated 2005–06 cost (£)*
Oman	2003	2	163	167
Chile	2003	2	155	159
Japan	2003	2	149	153
Saudi Arabia	2004	1	76	78
Kuwait	1988	2	148	152
Qatar	1998	1	129	132
UAE	1999	2	90	92
India	1984	5	156	160
South Korea	1988	2	304	312
Malaysia	1986	4.5	199	204
Greece	2000	2	132	135
Brunei	1995	2	132	135
Singapore	2001	1	156	160
Australia	1989	2	106	109
Turkey	1988	1	51	32
South Africa	2000	—	74	—

Defence Supply Secretary Office	*Date established*	*Staff*	*2004–05 cost (£000)*	*Estimated 2005–06 cost (£)*
Romania	2004	1	107	110
Vietnam	2005	1	—	5
Project office:				
Kuwait	1993	3	[2]	[2]
Saudi Arabia	1987	64	[2]	[2]

[1] Post closed in 2004–05.
[2] Cost met by customer government.

Whittington Barracks

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency will be based at the Whittington Barracks at Lichfield; whether the Army Training Regiment will remain at Lichfield; and if he will make a statement; [18659]

(2) if he will make a statement on the future use of Whittington Barracks in Lichfield. [18660]

Mr. Touhig: The future of Whittington Barracks is subject to two outstanding studies. One concerns the co-location of elements of the Defence Medical Educational Training Agency into the site. The other is a study into the capacity requirements for Phase 1 soldier training, which seeks to determine the most economical use of the existing Phase 1 training real estate in the long term. Both of these studies are now due to report in February 2006 and no decisions will be made before that date.

DS30 Mark2 Naval Gun

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the time scale is for the fitting of the DS30 Mark 2 Automatic 30mm Naval Gun to each of the remaining 13 Type-23 frigates. [19984]

Mr. Ingram: On current plans all Type 23 Frigates will be fitted with the DS30 Mark 2 Automatic 30mm Naval Gun, to replace existing DS30B guns. The new system will be fitted progressively during appropriate planned upkeep or maintenance periods from the end of 2006 onwards. Precise time scales for each vessel have not yet been finalised, although the roll-out programme is expected to be completed by 2014.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence with which missiles the Eurofighter will be equipped. [19439]

Mr. Ingram: The UK's Eurofighter Typhoon will be equipped initially with the ASRAAM short range and AMRAAM medium range air to air missiles. Integration of subsequent weapons is being considered under the Typhoon Future Capability Programme; these include the Meteor air to air missile, Storm Shadow cruise missile and Brimstone air to ground missile.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the delivery schedule is for the Eurofighter; and what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* payment terms per unit are. [19444]

Mr. Ingram: Eurofighter Typhoon deliveries to the UK started in 2003 and will continue until 2013 under current contracts. The rate of delivery over this period is between 11 and 21 aircraft per year.

The unit production cost for Typhoon published in Major Projects Report 2004 was £49.1 million.

The precise contractual arrangements for the Typhoon programme are commercially sensitive and are agreed between the four partner nations and contracted via the international procurement agency in Munich. However, in line with normal Ministry of Defence practice, interim payments are made against the achievement of technical and programme milestones, with a retention being paid on final delivery and acceptance of the aircraft.

Joint Strike Fighter

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress in acquiring F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft for the new aircraft carriers. [19445]

Mr. Ingram: In conjunction with the US and the other international partners within the Joint Strike Fighter programme, we are negotiating the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding for the co-operative production, support and follow on development phase.

Iraq

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists have been *(a)* mobilised, *(b)* killed and *(c)* decommissioned due to injury in Iraq in each year since March 2003. [21137]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The number of reservists mobilised to support Operation Telic by year since March 2003 is:

	Reservists
2003	8,690
2004	2,460
2005[1]	1,430

[1] As at 21 October 2005

In the time available it has not been possible to distinguish between those actually serving in Iraq and those supporting Operation Telic in other countries including the UK. In addition, a small number have been mobilised more than once to support the operation. The figures include volunteer, regular and sponsored reservists.

The number of reservists who have died on operations in Iraq by year since March 2003 is:

	Reservists
2003	4
2004	0
2005[1]	1

[1] As at 21 October 2005

No Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marine Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force Reservists have been medically discharged as a result of injuries received in Iraq.

Army information systems do not record where injuries occurred which led to a medical discharge. In order to answer the question a review of individual medical records would have to be undertaken and this could not be completed without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what compensation has been paid to reservists injured in Iraq since March 2003; and under which scheme. [21138]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Records are not kept in a way in which common law compensation paid to reservists can be separately identified. Common law compensation including costs of £413,398 has however been paid to service personnel in respect of injuries sustained during Operation Telic since March 2003.

In addition, the Veterans Agency administers two no-fault compensation schemes. The War Pension Scheme (WPS) provided compensation for illness or injury due to service in the armed forces up to 6 April 2005 whereas the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) has been in operation since that date.

Information under the WPS is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. There have been no awards of compensation made to reservists injured in Iraq under the AFCS.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how his Department has monitored the health of reservists in Iraq since March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [21139]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The health of reservists serving in Iraq is monitored through the system of routine provision of healthcare that is provided for all members of the armed forces on operations. Under the Reserve Forces Act 1996, the overarching principle of mobilized service is that reservists have the same levels of access to medical and healthcare as regular forces, wherever they are serving on operations overseas.

Our policy is that upon mobilization every reservist is given a full medical and dental examination prior to their acceptance into full-time service. The provision of healthcare continues throughout the period of full-time service through to when they return from operations for demobilization. At this point they receive a further medical examination and information about the availability of post-mobilization physical and mental health support.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average weekly expenditure by the Government on military operations in Iraq have been over the last three months; and if he will make a statement. [21215]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence cannot provide figures for the cost of operations in Iraq for the last three months because our stocktaking and audit activity to ensure robust and reliable figures is undertaken on an annual basis. In addition, expenditure varies with troop numbers and activities and could not sensibly be broken down on a meaningful weekly basis over such a short period of time.

Matthew Bevan

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made by the investigation into the death of Private Matthew Bevan at Pirbright barracks in June. [21524]

Mr. Touhig: Primacy of jurisdiction for the investigation into sudden deaths in the UK rests with the appropriate civilian police force. The investigation into the death of Private Matthew Bevan is a matter for the Surrey police.

Military Personnel

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total strength is of the Territorial Army; how many members of the Territorial Army *(a)* collected their bounty and *(b)* voluntarily left the service in each month since April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [18299]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 September 2005, the strength of the Territorial Army (TA) was some 35,500 personnel, including those currently mobilised and deployed but excluding those who are undertaking full-time reserve service. Some 23,550 TA personnel collected their bounty in the financial year 2004–05. The following table details the numbers of TA personnel who have voluntarily left the service in each month since April 2003.

Month	*Total number of TA Voluntary leavers*
April 2003	160
May 2003	190
June 2003	170
July 2003	130
August 2003	130
September 2003	190
October 2003	650
November 2003	690
December 2003	280
January 2004	640
February 2004	680
March 2004	680
April 2004	490
May 2004	660
June 2004	560
July 2004	460
August 2004	570
September 2004	480
October 2004	640
November 2004	540
December 2004	320
January 2005	590
February 2005	490
March 2005	430
April 2005	570

Month	Total number of TA Voluntary leavers
May 2005	500
June 2005	470
July 2005	500
August 2005	540

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* planned and *(b)* actual strength of all arms of the Territorial Army has been in each year from 1998 to 2005. [18301]

Mr. Touhig: The planned and actual strength of all arms of the Territorial Army (TA) at the start of each financial year from 1998 to 2005 can be found in the following table.

	Planned strength	Actual strength
1998	59,000	56,200
1999	59,000	50,870
2000	44,270	44,210
2001	42,460	40,690
2002	42,460	39,790
2003	41,610	38,510
2004	41,610	37,210
2005	41,610	36,170

Mr. Peter Hall

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the case of Mr. Peter Hall, seeking compensation for internment in the Far East. [20157]

Mr. Touhig: The Veterans Agency is responsible for deciding claims under the Ex-Gratia Payment Scheme for Former Far East Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees. Mr. Peter Hall's claim was rejected because he was unable to show that he met the necessary birthlink criterion, which requires former civilian internees who were British at the time of internment to have been born, or have had a parent or grandparent born, in the UK.

However, on 7 July 2005, considering the application for judicial review brought by Mrs. Diana Elias, the High Court found that the birth link criterion had resulted in unlawful indirect racial discrimination. After careful consideration, the Ministry of Defence decided to appeal against that decision to the Court of Appeal. Until these legal proceedings have been concluded, that part of the scheme relating to civilian internees has been suspended.

Should the High Court judgment be upheld, the Department would have to change the eligibility criteria and cases so far rejected would be reviewed in that light.

Parliamentary Counsel

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from his Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20133]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not collected.

Postal Services

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely change in demand on the British Forces Post Office during the Christmas period; and if he will make a statement. [20555]

Mr. Ingram: The British Forces Post Office has planned for a surge in demand over the Christmas period based on the experience of previous years and taking into account the number of service personnel deployed on operations.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the performance of the British Forces Post Office against its targets in 2004–05. [20556]

Mr. Ingram: The British Forces Post Office (BFPO) is a Defence Agency. It presented its Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–2005 to Parliament before the summer recess, and a copy is held in the Library of the House. The Annual Report articulated BFPO's performance for 2004–05, measured against six Key Target areas, sub-divided into 16 performance indicators. The BFPO met the targets set for all six Key Target areas, which was a creditable performance by the Agency.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the change in demand on *(a)* the British Forces Post Office and *(b)* the Defence Courier Service arising from current operations. [20571]

Mr. Ingram: The prime focus of British Forces Post Office (BFPO) is to ensure continued support to the Defence community wherever individuals are based including on Operation Telic. Assessments of demand, based on both historical data and future planned operations, are constantly updated to ensure that resources are available to meet the anticipated demands both for the delivery of Protectively Marked Material by the Defence Courier Service, and for all other mail through BFPO. This is normal business for BFPO, and BFPO has met its performance targets in these key areas.

Royal Highland Fusiliers

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* soldiers and *(b)* other army personnel took part in the 2005 survey of bullying in the Royal Highland Fusiliers; and if he will place a copy of the report of the survey in the Library. [21530]

Mr. Touhig: There has not been a survey specifically related to bullying in which members of 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers have taken part in 2005.

Stuart Henderson

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made by the investigation of the death of Fusilier Stuart Henderson in the Eskopi garrison in Cyprus on 24 September. [21522]

Mr. Touhig: Inquiries into the death of Fusilier Stuart Henderson have not yet been completed. In these circumstances it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Territorial Army

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks have been mobilised for service overseas within six months of completing their basic training in each of the last five years. [17652]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is set out in the following table. It should be noted that the figures represent those personnel mobilised in support of operations both overseas and in the United Kingdom.

	Officers	*Soldiers*
2000	1	18
2001	0	36
2002	2	91
2003	3	285
2004	2	66

Type 45 Destroyer

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make available a full copy of the final advice to Ministers concerning the selection of a contractor for the Type 45 Destroyer programme.[18579]

Mr. Ingram: It is not possible to make available a full copy of the final advice provided to Ministers as to do so would be prejudicial to the provision of full and frank advice to Ministers and could prejudice the commercial interests of the companies involved. I will, however, send the hon. Member a copy of a summary of the information held on this issue and certain papers included with the final advice to Ministers that have recently been made available in response to a request for information. I will place copies of the documents in the Library of the House.

Warrior Armoured Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are to upgrade the weaponry on the Warrior armoured personnel carrier. [19440]

Mr. Ingram: A programme has been established to investigate potential options for improving the lethality of the Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the BAE Systems built vessel Mounts Bay will be given lead ship status in the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project. [20390]

Mr. Ingram: As a result of delays to the Swan Hunter programme, Mounts Bay, built by BAE Systems, was the first of the four LSD(A)s to undergo sea trials and is expected to be the first of the four ships to be delivered. In this context she can be defined as the lead ship; however, Largs Bay, built by Swan Hunter, remains the First of Class vessel and as such is the benchmark against which the performance of the other three vessels will be judged.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Ministerial Meetings

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the meetings with non-governmental organisations and individuals which *(a)* he and *(b)* each minister in his Department has attended in his official capacity over the last three months. [17842]

Alan Johnson: Ministers meet many individuals and organisations and attend many functions relating to Government business, and as part of the process of policy development. To provide the detailed information requested would incur disproportionate cost. The daily on the record briefing by the Prime Minister's official spokesman regularly provides details of Ministers' public engagements.

Regional Development Agencies (Arts Expenditure)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has issued advice to regional development agencies about the use of public money for concept statues or sculptures. [20972]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* No. It is for England's Regional Development Agencies to address the economic development and regeneration needs of their regions, in the way that does most for the regions. The Regional Development Agency can make a grant, provided it is consistent with its statutory purposes and the strategic priorities set out in the regional economic strategies of the regions.

TRANSPORT

A11

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1077W, on transport, after advice has been taken from Eastern region on its priorities for transport investment, when he expects a final decision to be made on the dualling of the A11 in Suffolk. [22169]

Dr. Ladyman: We expect to receive the eastern region's advice on its priorities for investment in transport, housing and economic development at the end of January 2006, and to respond during the spring. It is not possible to say how far our response will include final decisions on specific schemes until we have seen and assessed the advice.

Barges (Bridge Strikes)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action has been taken by public authorities against barge drivers or owners as a result of bridge strikes on the Thames in the last 20 years. [22031]

Dr. Ladyman: Since 1995 there have been 10 recorded instance of motorised barges, or dumb barges under tow, striking a bridge in the Port of London Authority area of jurisdiction. Of these one master was successfully prosecuted under S108 of the Port of London Act; two masters were issued formal written reprimands by the Harbour Master; three investigations resulted in amendments to regulations and/or company operating instructions; in two cases enforcement action was not considered appropriate. One incident remains under investigation. In seven cases, the masters were qualified Watermen or Lightermen. In the three other incidents, the master held either a national Boat Masters Licence *or a* STCW certificate. Of the 10 incidents all bar one were classified as "minor/slight". The Battersea Road Bridge incident, currently under investigation, is classified as "Serious".

Only 10 years of data are currently available.

Drivers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the resources available to older drivers to assess their competence to continue to drive. [22490]

Dr. Ladyman: There are 16 mobility centres in the UK which provide advice, through assessment, on the driving competence of older people and disabled people, including the Department for Transport's own Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service (MAVIS). The Department for Transport provides funding support for the 11 mobility centres based in England. These centres provide advice where a medical condition has been identified that may affect driving competence, or where concern has been expressed about competence to drive. They also provide advice, information and assessment to any older or disabled drivers who contact them. In addition, many local authorities, through their Road Safety Officers, have developed initiatives to provide advice on competence to drive. Some of these schemes give advice through leaflets, while several provide an on-road driving assessment and report.

Motorways

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason warning signs advising motorists of lane closures on 17 August on the M1 in the vicinity of junction 29 were only posted on the northbound carriageway itself and not on the southbound carriageway. [21539]

Dr. Ladyman: The opposite carriageway is not signed when working on the other side.

On the night in question lanes 1, 2 and 3 were closed on the northbound carriageway between junctions 29 and 30 to enable lane 2 to be resurfaced as part of the Junction 29 to 30 major resurfacing scheme. The northbound traffic was using the hard shoulder throughout the works.

Variable Message Signs (VMS) on the northbound carriageway south of Junction 28 were activated to advise motorists to expect delays on approaching the overnight works since there was only one traffic lane running through the works.

On the southbound carriageway, the hard shoulder and lane 1 were closed over a length of approximately 200 metres for minor works. These works were complete before 00.15 hours and the traffic management was not on for a significant length of time. There were therefore no traffic queues on the southbound carriageway and no reason to activate the VMS to advise motorists to expect congestion on approaching these minor works.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* undertaken on the safety implications of using the hard shoulder as a running lane. [20344]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency undertook research into the safety implications of using the hard shoulder as a running lane before including proposals for a pilot in "Strategic Roads 2010", its response to the 10-year Transport Plan. The research included reviews of international experience and the Agency's own experience of using the hard shoulder as a running lane during motorway maintenance. It concluded that with appropriate monitoring, control systems and operating procedures safety levels can be maintained.

As part of the Active Traffic Management (ATM) project, being implemented between junctions 3A and 7 of the M42, extensive safety evaluation and research has been carried out prior to the consideration and use of the hard shoulder as a running lane. This pilot is scheduled to introduce controlled use of the hard shoulder as a running lane by March 2007, with the primary objective of ensuring that safety is not compromised. There is also extensive monitoring to establish the before and after effects of the pilot.

Documents have previously been made available which outline some of the research that has been carried out to support the safety aspects of hard shoulder running.

Multi-modal Study (Tyneside)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to implement the conclusions of the Tyneside area multi-modal study. [21017]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State's response to the conclusions of the Tyneside area multi-modal study is set out in the letter to the north east assembly of 9 July 2003 has been placed in the Libraries. Since this announcement, the Highways Agency has continued to develop proposals to improve the junctions on the A19 as recommended by the study. However, further progress on these specific schemes will be dependent on the advice the region provides to the Secretary of State on its transport priorities as part of the regional funding allocation process. The Highways Agency has also continued to develop proposals to reduce congestion on the A1 through Tyneside, but further progress will be subject to complementary work by local authorities in developing a strategy to reduce travel demand in future years. The Tyne and Wear local authorities have included a congestion strategy in their local transport plan for 2006–11 and the Tyne and Wear authorities have bid for Government financial support through the transport innovation fund to help with further

development of their demand management options. We expect to announce the successful bids under this initiative by the end of this year.

Railways

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers *(a)* died and *(b)* were seriously injured while travelling on rail services provided by C2C Rail Ltd and its predecessors in each year from 1976. [19994]

Derek Twigg: Information on rail passenger fatalities and injuries is held by the Health and Safety Executive only on a national and regional basis, not by line or train operator.

Thames Port Development

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the Thames Estuary fishing industry of the proposed dredging of the Estuary as part of the Thames Port development. [21602]

Dr. Ladyman: The matters considered by the Secretary of State are set out in his minded view letter of 20 July 2005 to the applicant for the proposed port. Paragraphs 31 and 66 of that letter and paragraph 15.2.12 of the inspector's report address the question of the likely impact on the fishing industry in the area.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what evidence he received during the public inquiry into the Thames Port proposal on the impact of the proposed work on *(a)* biodiversity and *(b)* the fishing industry, with particular reference to dredging in the Thames. [21603]

Dr. Ladyman: Evidence on potential impacts of the proposed port on biodiversity and on the fishing industry from dredging in the Thames was provided to the public inquiry which was held into the proposed port and on which the inspector reported to the Secretary of State. A significant amount of evidence on these topics was contained in the environmental statement and other submissions provided by the applicant. Evidence was also provided in submissions from a number of organisations and individuals.

Transport Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of section 175 of the Transport Act 2000. [20112]

Dr. Ladyman: No regulations have been made under section 175 of the Transport Act 2000.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Community Learning

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the possible effects of the funding settlement for future financial years for adult community learning on *(a)* course fees, *(b)* the choice of courses available, *(c)* the number of places available and *(d)* the competitiveness of the UK's skills-based economy. [21380]

Phil Hope: We announced on 21 October that we would safeguard £210 million for learning for personal and community development in 2006/07. On *(a)* we aim to increase fees in line with our wider fees policy for Further Education which is to work with the sector to establish with individuals and employers that they should pay at least 50 per cent. of course costs by the end of the decade, with safeguards for disadvantaged learners. On *(b)* there will continue to be a wide range of courses for adults. On *(c)* we should maintain the number of places in learning for personal and community development funded from the safeguarded budget. On *(d)* I would not expect any direct impact on the competitiveness of the UK's skills based economy from this type of learning but these courses do have wider benefits both to the individual and to society.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will to reply to the letter to her dated 30 August from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Nazia Parveen. [19511]

Beverley Hughes: My right hon. Friend, the Minister for Children, Young People and Families expects to be able to respond to the right hon. Member's letter of 30 August by 26 October. I understand my hon. Friend has received an interim reply explaining that it was necessary to obtain further information for a full reply.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether *(a)* she or *(b)* other Ministers in her Department use an automated signing machine or stamp for ministerial correspondence. [20507]

Bill Rammell: Guidance on handling ministerial correspondence is set out in "Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments" copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Automated signatures may be used in exceptional circumstances, for example when dealing with campaign correspondence, however all replies to ministerial correspondence are cleared by Ministers before being issued. Other than that all correspondence is signed by hand.

Degrees (Braintree)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the working age population in the Braintree constituency hold a qualification at degree level or above. [21381]

Bill Rammell: From the 2004/05 Annual Local Labour Force Survey, the percentage of the working age population in the Braintree constituency that hold a qualification at degree level or above is 21.2 per cent. This compares with 20.1 per cent. for Essex and 25.9 per cent. for England.

Departmental Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on rebranding in *(a)* her Department and *(b)* related agencies in each of the last five years. [18079]

Bill Rammell: Spend on rebranding for my Department and related agencies in the last five years, is as follows:

	Department or Agency	*Cost (£000)*
2001	DfES	56
2001–03	Teacher Training agency	88
2001–03	LSC	45

Education Funding

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital funding for (i) maintained schools, (ii) maintained faith schools and (iii) academies came from public sources in (A) 2004–05 and (B) 2005–06. [16393]

Jacqui Smith: The proportion of revenue funding from public sources to all maintained schools and academies is estimated to be in excess of 97 per cent., both for 2004–05 and 2005–06. The balance of up to 3 per cent. includes the following categories of income: *(a)* facilities and services *(b)* catering *(c)* supply teacher insurance claims and other insurance claims *(d)* income from contributions to visits and similar activities.

No records are kept centrally which distinguish between faith and non-faith schools. The proportion of capital expenditure from public sources to all maintained schools and academies is estimated to approach 100 per cent., except as noted below. On Academy start up, private sector sponsors contribute up to around £2 million towards an average cost of £25 million. Public sources generally contribute 90 per cent. of Voluntary Aided Schools, with sponsors contributing the remaining 10 per cent.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to change Government funding for *(a)* Havering college and *(b)* Havering sixth form college. [20798]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so is to ensure the 2006–07 funding allocations process begin with a clear and concise message on the priorities and principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published "Priorities for Success"—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus public funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement for 16–19 year olds and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce and continue to rebalance the contributions of the state, individuals and employers to the costs of learning.

The Chancellor announced in the 2004 spending review settlement for education and skills in April 2004, that there will be over £1 billion of additional investment in the learning and skills sector by 2007–08. We will not know what this will mean for regional and local budgets until allocations are made by the National LSC Office, following receipt of the grant letter from my Department.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the research on further education *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned by (i) her Department and (ii) the Learning and Skills Council in each year since 2001. [20818]

Bill Rammell: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will bring further education lecturers' pay into line with that of teachers; and if she will make a statement. [20313]

Bill Rammell: Further education colleges and sixth form colleges are autonomous bodies, which negotiate pay and conditions with staff and their unions without Government involvement either nationally or locally. The Government have no plans to impose a national pay structure on further education colleges.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make an assessment of the merits of ring-fencing Learning and Skills Council funds for lecturers' pay; and if she will make a statement. [20333]

Bill Rammell: We have worked hard with the LSC to simplify funding arrangements including reducing the number of separate budgets for further education. This has reduced bureaucracy and has made college funding more simple and transparent. We would be reluctant to reverse this process, which has been welcomed by colleges and their staff. "Success for All", the strategy for reforming further education and training, makes clear that the Government's approach to pay is to enable local flexibility to meet local needs and to encourage a clear link between pay and individual performance. FE colleges and sixth form colleges are autonomous bodies, which negotiate pay and conditions with staff and their unions without Government involvement either nationally or locally.

Key Stage Tests

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of secondary school pupils achieved level 5 and above at key stage 3 in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing, *(c)* mathematics and *(d)* reading, writing and mathematics combined in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004. [17705]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information, including the data for 2005, is shown in the following table.

Key stage 3 results 2002-05

	Percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above			
	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Reading	—	68	65	68
Writing	—	65	72	76
Mathematics	67	71	73	74
Reading, writing and mathematics	—	—	57	59

Notes:

1. Reading and writing results were not collected in 2002. Reading and writing was assessed in a single paper prior to and including 2002 therefore the results could not be reported separately until 2003.
2. The reading, writing and mathematics combined figure for 2003 is unavailable. These figures are held separately and cannot be matched reliably enough to give an accurate national result.
3. Figures are for all schools in England.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the relative attainment at key stage 3 between *(a)* boys and girls and *(b)* those eligible and ineligible for free school meals since the launch of the key stage 3 strategy. [19198]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the attainment of pupils in key stage 3 tests by characteristics are published on the Department's website. Figures for 2004 are available at:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000564/index.shtml

Figures for 2002 and 2003 are available at:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000448/index.shtml

A gender breakdown of the 2001 figures is available at:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000344/index.shtml

The 2001 figures cannot be broken down into those eligible and ineligible for free school meals.

Looked-after Children

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated in 2005–06 to helping children who run away from care homes; and what steps are being taken to tackle the problem. [21031]

Maria Eagle: The Department of Health published 'Children Missing from Care and Home—a guide to good practice' in November 2002, in tandem with the Social Exclusion Unit's report "Young Runaways". This was issued, along with Circular LAC (2002)17 under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, making the guidance a requirement for local authorities. This guidance requires that protocols about the management of 'missing from care incidents' are drawn up with the police and that a senior manager is appointed to monitor these and that there should be regular reports to council members with responsibility for "corporate parenting" on patterns of children going missing from care.

This guidance supports the requirements that are set out in the Children's Homes Regulations 2002 and the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and their related national minimum standards, that all homes and fostering services should have explicit procedures to follow when children in their care may be missing or absent.

Information about costs incurred by local authorities or other agencies in responding to incidents when children go missing from care is not collected centrally.

National Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 962W on national vocational qualifications; how many national vocational qualifications were awarded *(a)* in food preparation and cooking and *(b)* without the nutrition element in each of the last five years. [21165]

Bill Rammell: The numbers of National Vocational Qualifications awarded in Food Preparation and Cooking in each of the last five years are set out in the following table.

National vocational qualifications awarded in food preparation and cooking

Year of award	*Number of awards (rounded to the nearest 100)*
1999/2000	6,400
2000/01	8,800
2001/02	8,200
2002/03	14,000
2003/04	15,000

Source:
National Information System for Vocational Qualifications

It is not possible to identify qualifications awarded in food preparation and cooking without the nutrition element.

Overseas University Students

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many overseas students attended universities in England in 2004–05; and how much they contributed to the income of these universities. [19315]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information is given in the table. Figures for 2004/5 will not be available until January 2006.

	Non-EU overseas students at English HE Institutions 2003/04
Number of students[1]	161,600
Income from HE course fees (£ million)	1,121.5

[1] Postgraduate and undergraduate students. Rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Private Children's Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the decision in R. *v.* Leonard Cheshire Foundation [2002] H.R.L.R.30 on the applicability of the Human Rights Act 1998 to privately-run children's homes. [20734]

Maria Eagle: This case relates to adults who expected to live out the remainder of their lives in a particular residential care home. Although sometimes older children in particular are placed in a children's home until such time as they are ready for a move to independence, for most children such placements are made on a much shorter-term basis.

Before placing a child in a children's home, local authorities need to take a clear view of the stability and viability of the home, and its ability to provide care to meet the child's individual needs for the required period of time. I would expect a local authority placing a child in a children's home to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the child's human rights are protected.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from her Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20142]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected.

Schools

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 361W, on school play areas, if she will publish the data her Department collects from local education authorities on the suitability of sports provision within school premises. [18871]

Jacqui Smith: Data collected by my Department from education authorities on the suitability of sports facilities will be published by the end of December on the Department's Teachernet website.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what is the average distance travelled by children from home to *(a)* secondary schools and *(b)* primary schools is in (i) Ribble Valley and (ii) Lancashire. [21894]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Average distance[1] travelled from home to school in miles

	Primary pupils[2]	*Secondary pupils[3]*
England	0.8	1.9
Lancashire local authority	0.8	2.0
Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency	1.0	2.9

[1] Distances calculated are straight line and take no account of the route pupils follow in order to get to school.

[2] Includes middle deemed primary.

[3] Includes middle deemed secondary, CTCs and academies.

Source:
Annual School Census 2005 Final.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many recorded incidents of physical assault by students on staff there were in each secondary school in *(a)* Havering, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Greater London in each of the past five years. [20582]

Jacqui Smith: Injuries at work due to violence, which result in absence for more than three days, are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR95). Figures for England show that there have been no fatal injuries to teachers since recording began under RIDDOR95. The following table shows the number of non-fatal injuries to secondary school workers involving acts of violence where the assailant was a student reported to HSE's Field Operations Directorate in Essex and Greater London between 2001/02 and 2003/04, the only years for which data are available.

	Havering	*Essex*	*Greater London*
2001/02			
Non-fatal major injury	0	0	0
Over-3-day injury	0	0	0
All reported injuries	0	0	0
2002/03			
Non-fatal major injury	0	0	0
Over-3-day injury	0	0	3
All reported injuries	0	0	3
2003/04			
Non-fatal major injury	0	1	2
Over-3-day injury	0	5	5
All reported injuries	0	6	7

Note:
Secondary school level data is not available.
Source:
Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has issued to local authorities on improving capacity within schools to increase parental choice. [19393]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* This Government are wholeheartedly committed to the principle of real choice for parents and pupils so that they can chose between excellent local schools. Parents have the right to express a preference for whatever school they wish their child to attend and we want as many parents as possible to be able to send their child to their preferred school.

School admission authorities have a statutory duty to comply with parental preference, unless a particular school is oversubscribed, in which case places must be allocated according to the published admission arrangements.

We have introduced a number of measures to make it easier for the best schools to expand in line with parental demand including making dedicated capital funding available for the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools. Schools wishing to expand must follow a statutory process—consulting interested parties and publishing a statutory notice. The final decision is taken by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or an independent Schools Adjudicator. Our guidance to SOCs and adjudicators

makes it clear that there is a presumption in favour of approving proposals to expand a successful and popular school.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on supplying schools directly with printed publications for use in classrooms. [19694]

Jacqui Smith: The Department's method on sending printed publications automatically to schools in England is set out in the new relationship with schools document. The Department ceased sending printed publications to schools in 2004 as detailed research showed that schools wanted to be able to choose the printed publications they required.

We have given schools this choice by introducing the online ordering system which enables schools to choose whether to download electronic copies or order the paper based publications they need at the right time for them and in the multiples they require. A fortnightly email service to schools informs them of new and important publications.

This has resulted in schools being able to order a wider variety of publications from the Department, putting schools in direct control of what they receive and when they receive it.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what basis funds from the Schools Access Initiative are allocated to local education authorities. [21805]

Jacqui Smith: Funds from the Schools Access Initiative are allocated to local authorities on the basis of the relative number of pupils in each authority, aggregated from schools' census data. £84 million per annum has been allocated to local authority schools, and £16 million per annum to voluntary aided schools. Further information on the initiative can be found on www.teachernet.gov.uk.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the servicing of historic debt relating to the land and buildings of foundation schools will be transferred to such schools; whether a group of schools can become a single foundation; and if she will set out the financial regime for foundation schools. [21074]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* When a school changes category to become a foundation school, all land (including buildings) held by the local authority for the purposes of the school transfers to and vests in the foundation body or the governing body of the new school if it has no foundation. The transfer would include any rights or liabilities enjoyed or incurred by the authority in connection with the land and may include certain contractual financial liabilities. However, any liability of a local authority in respect of the principal of, or any interest on, a loan is excluded from transfer. In the first instance it is for the local authority and the school to agree on what land, rights and liabilities should transfer.

It is possible for a charitable foundation to act for more than one school and so far as recurrent funding is concerned, there is no difference in the arrangements between community, foundation and voluntary schools.

Student Finance

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many university students have been affected by the decision to take the income of step-parents into account when calculating student support. [19693]

Bill Rammell: The number of new students in England and Wales beginning their studies in the 2004/05 academic year who could have potentially been affected by the change in regulations to include the income of co-habiting partners in the means-testing of student support is around 10,000.

However, not all of these students may have been affected by the change in regulations since family income may remain below the threshold at which private contributions towards support begins. Similarly, income may have already been above the threshold at which means-tested support ends without the inclusion of a co-habiting partner's income.

Data cover parents who are single, separated, divorced or widowed who are living with a partner, either married or unmarried.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the costs incurred by local education authorities in transferring to a national system of processing student loan applications in 2004; whether a regulatory impact assessment was published; what reimbursement such authorities received for such costs; and if she will make a statement; [19881]

(2) what estimate she has made of the costs incurred by local education authorities in processing student loan applications in 2005–06; and by what system such authorities will be reimbursed for such costs. [19882]

Bill Rammell: Provision for the costs of administering student finance applications is made within the overall funding for education provided to local authorities (LA). It is for LAs to determine how much they spend on student finance administration within that settlement. Some LAs have claimed that their costs increased as a result of the introduction of the national Protocol IT system in 2004–05. We are therefore investigating this issue but do not intend to make a decision on reimbursement until the costs for the 2005–06 financial year are known. This work will be completed around early summer 2006.

When the policy was being developed, the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process was not triggered by impacts purely on the public sector. Although we therefore did not conduct a RIA, we consulted extensively with LAs throughout policy development and implementation and agreed all major decisions with them.

Sure Start

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of Sure Start programmes on the *(a)* development, *(b)* language and *(c)* behaviour of under-fives; and on what evidence the assessment was based. [18840]

Beverley Hughes: A large scale, comprehensive evaluation of Sure Start local programmes is under way which will assess, among other outcomes, the cognitive, behavioural and language development of 8,000 children living in communities served by Sure Start. Children have been assessed at 9 months and will be assessed again at age 3 and 5, and compared to children in similar circumstances who do not live in an SSLP area.

Assessments of children's development are made using standardised assessment scales. These include a measure of how many words a child uses, their ability to recognise numbers and shapes and observing the child's behaviour. These assessments are undertaken by trained researchers. Parents are also interviewed and other background characteristics of the family are collected.

An assessment of speech and language development in SSLPs showed that the proportion of children with a high number of words at age 2 and whose parents had no concerns about their child's language, rose from 70 per cent. to 76 per cent. between 2001 to 2004.

University Endowments

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made on the pilot scheme for matched funding to help universities build up new endowments. [20324]

Bill Rammell: In our response in December 2004 to the Voluntary Giving Task Force report, we announced that we would make available "pump-priming" matched funding of £7.5 million over three years to help English institutions build their capacity to raise income from donations and we invited Universities UK to bring forward suitable proposals and administer the scheme. Universities UK, having invited applications, are currently considering an encouraging number of proposals from institutions, and expect to announce allocations before the end of this financial year.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Algerian Nationals

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Algerian nationals have been removed from the UK in each of the last eight years. [18991]

Mr. McNulty: The exact information requested is not available. Removals from the UK are split into two separate categories, asylum removals and non-asylum removals. Information on non-asylum removals, broken down by nationality, prior to 2004 is not available. Only information on asylum removals, broken down by nationality, is available for each of the last eight years.

Information on non-asylum removals, broken down by nationality, is only available from 2004. In 2004, there were 335 non-asylum, Algerian nationals, removed. This figure has been rounded to the nearest five and is provisional.

The most recently published statistics on asylum removals, which includes voluntary departures and assisted returns, covers the second quarter of 2005, this has been published in the quarterly asylum statistics bulletin available from the Home Office website. Also, information on removals, including voluntary departures and voluntary returns, of asylum seekers, 1996 to 2004, has been published in the asylum statistics United Kingdom 2004 statistical bulletin. These publications can be found on the Home Office website:

athttp://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Anti-social Behaviour (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance the Government have given to local authorities concerning vandalism in Gravesham. [20079]

Hazel Blears: In July 2004 the Government restated its commitment to tackling crime and disorder through the publication of the 2004 spending review, which included a Home Office target to bring crime levels down by a further 15 percent. between 2002–03 and 2007–08, and more in those areas with the highest crime. The crimes covered by this target include vandalism. Through the Government Offices for the regions and the Welsh Assembly Government, we have negotiated three year targets with each crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) in England and community safety partnership (CSP) in Wales as their contribution to the delivery of the national target.

In the south-east, the Government Office has taken forward these arrangements via a series of communications with partners, including a regional target-setting event. They also spent time with Gravesham CDRP discussing the targets to be achieved by 2007–08. In terms of volume, criminal damage was the largest contributor and the importance of reducing this type of crime was therefore stressed. Gravesham subsequently set a target to reduce criminal damage, including vandalism, by 30 percent.

As part of the TOGETHER campaign, we have also published a range of step-by-step guides on tackling various aspects of antisocial behaviour, with two more in preparation. Much of the advice in these documents is applicable to vandalism. We are also currently collecting examples of good practice that will be disseminated to all partnerships later this year to help them drive down vandalism in their areas.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions there have been for acts of vandalism in the Gravesham area in each year since 1997. [20081]

Hazel Blears: There is no specific offence of vandalism. Most behaviour which we understand as vandalism would probably be covered by the offence of criminal damage, although the two might not always be exactly the same.

The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of offenders found guilty of criminal damage in Kent police force area is contained in the table. It is not possible to identify those convicted in the Gravesham area, as the data is not collected at this level of detail. Statistics for 2004 will be available mid November.

Number of offenders found guilty of criminal damage at all courts, Kent police force area 1997–2003[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Other criminal damage Criminal damage (value of damage over £5,000)	Criminal Damage Act 1971. Explosive Substances Act 1883 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Area Act 1979 Post Office Act 1953 Malicious Damage Act 1861	149	233	173	187	180	257	339
Criminal damage (value of damage £5, 000 or less) and causing damage to an allotment through negligence or any unlawful act	Criminal Damage Act 1971 Allotments Act 1922	859	1,047	1,080	970	917	882	1,025

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Child Abuse Investigations

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the interviewing techniques used with possible victims in child abuse investigations. [20171]

Hazel Blears: Guidance on interviewing vulnerable or intimidated witnesses (VIWs) is contained in 'Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance for Vulnerable or Intimidated Witnesses, including Children' issued in January 2002. This guidance became operational in May 2002 when it superseded "Memorandum of Good Practice on Video Recorded Interviews with Child Witnesses for Criminal Proceedings". Victims in sexual offence proceedings are considered to be intimidated. Other witnesses in these cases—but not the accused—may also be treated as vulnerable or intimidated.

Achieving Best Evidence covers preparing and planning for interviews with VIWs, decisions about whether or not to conduct an interview and decisions about whether the interview should be video recorded or whether it would be more appropriate for a written statement to be taken. It covers the interviewing of such witnesses both for the purposes of making a video-recorded statement and also for taking a written statement, their preparation for court and any subsequent court appearance.

Other guidance includes: 'Guidance on the Recording of Interviews with Vulnerable and Significant (Key) Witnesses' issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers; and 'Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Inter-agency issues' issued jointly by the Home Office and Department of Health.

Community Support Officers

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are in post in *(a)* each police force area and *(b)* each district council area in England and Wales. [20436]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of community support officers (CSOs) for each force at 30 June 2005 is set out in the table. We do not collect the number of CSOs at district council level.

Data on CSOs at basic command unit level for each force can be found on the Home Office website at

http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/community-support-officers.

Community support officer numbers as at 30 June 2005

Force	*Numbers*
Avon and Somerset	144
Bedfordshire	37
Cambridgeshire	80
Cheshire	80
City of London	14
Cleveland	91
Cumbria	17
Derbyshire	43
Devon and Cornwall	78
Dorset	50
Durham	73
Dyfed-Powys	25
Essex	174
Gloucestershire	66
Greater Manchester	263
Gwent	85
Hampshire	26
Hertfordshire	110
Humberside	20
Kent	102
Lancashire	178
Leicestershire	100
Lincolnshire	72
Merseyside	164
Metropolitan Police	2,105
Norfolk	66
North Wales	60
North Yorkshire	75
Northamptonshire	39
Northumbria	129
Nottinghamshire	112
South Wales	120
South Yorkshire	124
Staffordshire	62
Suffolk	35
Surrey	105
Sussex	240
Thames Valley	113
Warwickshire	60
West Mercia	82
West Midlands	259
West Yorkshire	413
Wiltshire	43
Totals	6,334

Note:
1. Figures are full-time equivalent, therefore because of rounding, there may be discrepancy between totals and the sum of the constituent parts.

IMPACT

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to publish the business case for the police national intelligence database, IMPACT; and if he will make a statement on the progress of the project. [18966]

Hazel Blears: The IMPACT programme has made significant progress on two fronts. It will deliver, by the end of 2005, a national index of names (the IMPACT nominal index) which will enable any force to check where information is held on individuals by other forces. A programme definition project is being finalised. Under it, plans will be set out for longer term improvements in police information management, including the future of the police national computer.

A fuller statement on progress in implementing the Bichard recommendations will be placed before the House shortly. This will include a more detailed statement about the progress of the IMPACT programme. For commercial reasons, business cases are not released until contracts have been signed and associated contractual activities completed.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the date by which IMPACT will be in service in each police authority area in England and Wales. [18967]

Hazel Blears: The IMPACT programme is intended to deliver improved police information management and information sharing systems over the next five years. The first application, a national index of names (the IMPACT nominal index) will be deployed into a child abuse investigation unit in every force in England and Wales by the end of 2005. Together with the interim police local cross-check (pending full police local cross-check delivered as part of the IMPACT programme on which preparatory work continues) this will enable police forces and the Criminal Records Bureau to check where information is held on individuals by other forces. Further decisions about the implementation timetable will be made by the end of March 2006.

Road Traffic Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were (i) charged and (ii) found guilty in (A) Essex and (B) England and Wales of an offence under (1) sections 22 and 22A, (2) section 27, (3) sections 28 and 29, (4) section 30 and (5) section 41A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [20101]

Hazel Blears: Statistics of persons charged with crimes are not collected centrally.

Information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database is contained in the table and gives the number of males and females found guilty at all courts of sections 22, 22A, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 41A Road Traffic Act 1988 in Essex and England and Wales, 1999–2003. (Statistics for 2004 will be available late November).

Number of offenders by sex, found guilty of various offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 in Essex and England and Wales, 1999–2003[1]

		Essex			
		1999		2000	
Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Leaving vehicle in a dangerous position	Road Traffic Act s.22	3	—	5	—
Causing danger by causing anything to be on a road, interfering with a vehicle or traffic equipment	Road Traffic Act s.22A as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 s.6	4	—	1	—
Offences in relation to dogs under the Act	Road Traffic Act s.27	—	—	—	—
Reckless and dangerous driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.28	1	—	1	—
Careless driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.29	3	—	2	—
Pedal cyclist driving under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act s.30	—	—	—	—
Brakes defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.16 and 18 and Sch. 3; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	8	3	12	2
Steering defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.29; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	—	—	—	—
Tyres defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.25–27; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	170	19	122	17

Offence description	Principal statute	Essex 2001 Male	2001 Female	2002 Male	2002 Female	2003 Male	2003 Female
Leaving vehicle in a dangerous position	Road Traffic Act s.22	—	1	1	—	2	1
Causing danger by causing anything to be on a road, interfering with a vehicle or traffic equipment	Road Traffic Act s.22A as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 s.6	1	—	—	—	7	—
Offences in relation to dogs under the Act	Road Traffic Act s.27	1	—	—	—	—	—
Reckless and dangerous driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.28	—	—	—	—	—	—
Careless driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.29	—	—	—	—	3	—
Pedal cyclist driving under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act s.30	1	—	1	—	—	—
Brakes defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.16 and 18 and Sch. 3; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	15	1	14	2	6	—
Steering defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.29; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	2	—	—	—	—	—
Tyres defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.25–27; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	101	7	70	6	54	4

Offence description	Principal statute	England and Wales 1999 Male	1999 Female	2000 Male	2000 Female
Leaving vehicle in a dangerous position	Road Traffic Act s.22	123	25	90	12
Causing danger by causing anything to be on a road, interfering with a vehicle or traffic equipment	Road Traffic Act s.22A as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 s.6	90	4	83	5
Offences in relation to dogs under the Act	Road Traffic Act s.27	36	68	28	37
Reckless and dangerous driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.28	28	1	22	1
Careless driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.29	101	4	81	3
Pedal cyclist driving under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act s.30	73	3	58	—
Brakes defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.16 and 18 and Sch. 3; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	1,025	64	914	58
Steering defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.29; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	82	3	41	4
Tyres defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.25–27; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	7,607	709	5,721	530

Offence description	Principal statute	England and Wales 2001 Male	2001 Female	2002 Male	2002 Female	2003 Male	2003 Female
Leaving vehicle in a dangerous position	Road Traffic Act s.22	90	23	67	11	65	16
Causing danger by causing anything to be on a road, interfering with a vehicle or traffic equipment	Road Traffic Act s.22A as added by Road Traffic Act 1991 s.6	87	6	91	4	88	5
Offences in relation to dogs under the Act	Road Traffic Act s.27	21	26	14	15	10	8

Offence description	Principal statute	England and Wales 2001 Male	2001 Female	2002 Male	2002 Female	2003 Male	2003 Female
Reckless and dangerous driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.28	19	—	18	—	17	1
Careless driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act s.29	59	1	50	4	53	6
Pedal cyclist driving under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act s.30	37	1	37	1	41	2
Brakes defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.16 and 18 and Sch. 3; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	651	35	545	29	422	21
Steering defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs. 1986 Regs.29; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	47	1	48	1	26	1
Tyres defective	Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regs 1986 Regs.25–27; Road Traffic Act 1988 s.41A as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s.8	4,363	417	3,790	394	3,525	318

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Substance Abuse Offences

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were convicted for *(a)* drunkenness, *(b)* driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and *(c)* causing death by dangerous driving when under the influence of drink or drugs in each year since 1997 in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each London borough. [20733]

Hazel Blears: Tables one-four show the number of convictions for *(a)* drunkenness, *(b)* driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs and *(c)* causing death by dangerous driving when under the influence of drink or drugs in each year since 1997 in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each London borough. Conviction figures for 2004 will be available at the end of November.

Number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness by London borough, region and England 1997–2003[1]

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Inner London magistrates courts							
City of London police							
Guildhall Justice Rooms	1	—	1	5	—	—	—
Metropolitan police							
Bow Street	15	15	21	8	69	24	10
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	14	14	1	5	3	3	1
Greenwich and Woolwich	3	12	8	7	6	20	28
Highbury Corner	14	18	25	2	1	4	10
Horseferry Road	39	28	26	14	79	35	14
Marylebone	9	7	12	1	—	—	—
South Western	7	8	7	1	—	2	1
Thames	4	1	7	1	1	7	2
West London	187	120	66	66	29	45	38
Inner London juvenile courts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Outer London borough							
Metropolitan police							
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	3	2	2
Barnet	1	5	1	4	9	12	4
Bexley	2	—	—	2	2	—	5
Brent	36	45	37	19	3	10	12
Bromley	2	1	4	—	8	4	1
Croydon	7	33	14	7	11	10	0
Ealing	7	14	3	4	5	5	7
Enfield	4	—	2	1	1	1	2
Haringey	—	7	6	6	9	7	19
Harrow	1	4	7	2	5	1	6
Havering	—	—	—	—	5	10	1
Hillingdon	7	19	1	8	7	8	2
Hounslow	5	19	16	13	9	4	11
Kingston-upon-Thames	3	6	3	1	1	1	—
Merton	4	3	17	2	4	2	12
Newham	3	8	5	8	11	2	4
Redbridge	—	1	1	1	1	1	1
Richmond upon Thames	8	13	8	5	6	1	4
Sutton	2	—	2	1	5	7	10
Waltham Forest	3	2	4	1	1	—	—
Total Metropolitan police	387	403	304	190	294	228	210

Number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness by London borough, region and England 1997–2003[1]

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Greater London	388	403	305	195	294	228	210
Regions							
North East	135	118	107	67	122	106	88
North West	387	393	314	344	264	262	149
Yorkshire and Humberside	191	232	214	262	221	202	222
East Midands	108	135	116	119	89	107	78
West Midlands	240	208	162	67	92	109	123
East of England	496	583	507	399	332	264	293
London[2]	393	405	310	197	296	228	210
South East	938	1,106	866	684	629	541	486
South West	445	530	538	440	379	382	350
Wales	209	388	377	390	317	309	300
England	3,333	3,710	3,134	2,579	2,424	2,201	1,999
England and Wales	3,542	4,098	3,511	2,969	2,741	2,510	2,299

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes a small number of defendants convicted in courts outside London.
Source:
RDS—Office for criminal justice reform

Youth Crime (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people have been *(a)* found guilty of a crime and *(b)* placed in custody in Kent in the last five years for which figures are available. [20091]

Hazel Blears: The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database is contained in the table and gives the number of young people aged 10 to 17, found guilty of committing a crime and given a custodial sentence at all courts in Kent police force area, 1999–2003. Statistics for 2004 will be available late November.

Number of young people, 10–17 years, found guilty of all offences at all courts and sentenced to custody in the Kent police force area, 1999–2003[1]

	Found guilty	Sentenced to immediate custody
1999	2,465	158
2000	2,298	156
2001	2,392	217
2002	2,321	159
2003	2,784	144

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

PRIME MINISTER

Iran

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with the US and the E-3 regarding Iran's response to the E-3 request for objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes [21270]

The Prime Minister: Ministers and officials are in frequent contact with their French, German and US counterparts about Iran's nuclear programme. We share deep concern at Iran's decision to resume uranium conversion activities, contrary to successive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board resolutions and in violation of the framework agreed by Iran for negotiations on long-term arrangements. The E3/EU have urged Iran to honour its obligations and comply fully with the requests of the IAEA Board of Governors. I hope Iran will reinstate its suspension of fuel cycle activities and return to talks with the E3/EU on the basis of the Paris Agreement

NORTHERN IRELAND

Police/Security Forces (Targeting)

7. **David Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* members of the (i) Police Service of Northern Ireland and (ii) Royal Irish Regiment and *(b)* prison officers have moved from their homes because of targeting by republicans over the last 12 months. [20240]

Mr. Woodward: There have been no Royal Irish Regiment house moves on security grounds in the last 12 months.

Fourteen police officers were forced to move from their homes due to threats attributed to republicans in the period from 1 October 2004 until 30 September 2005.

Over the last 12 months two prison officers have moved from their home as a result of dissident republican threat.

Tourism

8. **Ms Barlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the impact of tourism on the Northern Ireland economy; and if he will make a statement. [20241]

Angela E. Smith: Tourism is making an increasingly important contribution to the Northern Ireland economy, with over two million visitors a year. There are now more visitors than there are residents.

Sporting Competitions (Eligibility)

9. **Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether every child in Northern Ireland is eligible to represent the UK in international sporting competition. [20242]

Mr. Hanson: International sporting competitions are organised by sports governing bodies and eligibility requirements are determined by them. Children in Northern Ireland are eligible to represent the UK in international sporting competition provided they satisfy the respective sports governing bodies' eligibility requirements.

Security

10. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland. [20243]

14. **Mark Pritchard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland. [20247]

Mr. Hain: The security situation is improving. The latest Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) report stated that the initial signs following the provisional IRA statement were encouraging. However, paramilitaries, especially loyalists and dissident republicans, continue to exert a malign influence over communities.

I published an updated normalisation programme on 1 August. This will be taken forward, provided the enabling environment is maintained.

Peace Process

11. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recent developments in the peace process. [20244]

Mr. Hain: There have been major, positive developments in the process over the summer. The IRA's 28 July statement ordered an end to the armed campaign and instructed the development of purely political and democratic programmes. In my 28 July letter to all MPs, I welcomed the statement for its clarity and lack of conditionality.

On 26 September, the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning reported that the Commission had "determined that the IRA has met its commitment to put all its arms beyond use in a manner called for by the legislation."

I laid in Parliament the 7th report of the Independent Monitoring Commission on 19 October. That report concludes that the PIRA statement, despite coming at a point when five sixths of the period under review had elapsed, is "very significant". The statement and the act of decommissioning reported by the IICD on 26 September have created a platform for future progress and 'initial signs following the PIRA statement are encouraging'. However, It is essential that the IMC, as they state, are able to observe 'cumulative changes in behaviour over a more sustained period of time . . . '.

I await the next report of the Commission, due in January 2006.

Parades Commission

12. **Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the reconstituted Parades Commission. [20245]

Mr. Woodward: The Government are committed to ensuring, so far as is practicable, that the Parades Commission is representative of the people of Northern Ireland. The current appointments expire on 31 December. A reappointments process began on 25 July and is on schedule.

The process has been run in close co-operation with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). An OCPA independent assessor is one of three panel members sifting and interviewing applicants for both chair and membership.

Devolved Government

13. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on devolved government in the Province. [20246]

Mr. Hanson: A return to fully inclusive power-sharing devolved government in Northern Ireland remains the aim. It is essential that we see an end to paramilitary activity and criminality for there to be sufficient trust and confidence among the parties for this to be achieved.

There have been major developments over the summer that open the prospect that devolved government can be re-established. The IRA's 28 July statement calling an end to the armed campaign, the independently verified decommissioning of all IRA weapons, and the encouraging signs on paramilitary activity and criminality identified in the IMC's 7th report are all to be welcomed.

Paramilitary Organisations

15. **Michael Fabricant** (Lichfield) (Con): To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of how many *(a)* punishment beatings, *(b)* expulsions and *(c)* other criminal activities have been committed by republican paramilitary organisations since 4 pm on 28 July; and if he will make a statement. [20248]

Mr. Woodward: PSNI statistics for the period in question confirm that two assaults have been attributed to republican paramilitaries during this period.

Expulsions are not recorded statistically by PSNI.

The Government's position is clear on criminality: In order to create the conditions for political progress to continue to flourish, there must be an end to criminality and paramilitary activity.

The Secretary of State has demanded that the IRA sever its links to gangsterism and that, just as it has turned its back on paramilitary activity, it must do so on criminality.

1911 Census

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons the findings of the 1911 Census cannot be released for public use. [19938]

Angela E. Smith: The Census in 1911 was conducted on an all-Ireland basis. The records are available for public inspection in the National Archives of Ireland. This office is planning to digitise the 1911 forms for the whole of Ireland and to make them available on-line. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is considering obtaining and making publicly available microfilms of the 1911 forms.

Avian Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who will receive priority access to vaccination against avian influenza if an outbreak of the disease occurs in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [21252]

Mr. Woodward: In the event of an outbreak of avian influenza here, priority access to vaccination where available, will be given to poultry workers on premises where disease is suspected or confirmed, as well as Department of Agriculture and Rural Development staff and contractors potentially exposed to the disease.

This same priority of access would also apply to the provision of antivirals, drawn from DHSSPS stock for pandemic flu, and where appropriate seasonal flu vaccinations.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to prevent the spread of avian influenza to Northern Ireland. [21559]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development keeps the threat posed by the spread of Avian Influenza (AI) under constant review and initiates protective measures deemed necessary to prevent its introduction as appropriate.

In line with European Union-wide measures, actions taken to date have included banning the importation of live birds and products from Avian Influenza affected areas. Other Decisions of the European Union (EU) Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health aimed at taking further preventative measures to limit the potential spread of the disease will be acted upon as required.

The Department has recently re-issued advice to the poultry industry regarding biosecurity measures to be observed to limit the risk of disease entering Northern Ireland and stopping its spread should it be introduced. The Department also provides information and guidance through its website to stakeholders and is engaged in a series of discussions with key industry representative bodies on an on-going basis to ensure that there is a regular exchange on the developing situation.

For the third successive year, an AI survey is being carried out this autumn on certain types of poultry. Wild bird surveillance is also being undertaken, with the support of the Environment and Heritage Service and other non-government organisations.

There is close co-operation between relevant Departments to ensure a joined-up approach to the threat of AI including in respect of the implications for public health. Officials are also working closely with their counterparts from the Department of Agriculture and Food in the Republic of Ireland in relation to AI, which is of mutual interest in the context of the island of Ireland.

The Department has a contingency plan in place, which has been approved by the EU, to ensure that any outbreak of AI is dealt with quickly and effectively. This plan is continually being reviewed and updated, and has been tested on two occasions in recent weeks.

Blood Transfusion Service

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost of the blood transfusion service in Northern Ireland has been in each of the last three years. [21640]

Mr. Woodward: The total cost of the blood transfusion service in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years:

	£
2002–03	15,657,776
2003–04	18,159,122
2004–05	19,853,474

These figures represent the total revenue expenditure of the blood transfusion service in Northern Ireland for the last three years.

Briggs Rock Pumping Station

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he intends to take to address the failings of the Briggs Rock Pumping Station outside Groomsport, County Down. [20643]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of water service (Mrs Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the Hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs Katherine Bryan to Lady Hermon dated October 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what action he intends to take to address the failings of the Briggs Rock Pumping Station outside Groomsport, Co. Down(20643). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Wastewater from Bangor receives mechanical screening before discharge to the Irish Sea via a marine outfall at Briggs Rock. The screening plant originally comprised two automatic rotating screens which removed most solids and materials from the sewage before discharge to sea. The screens became increasingly difficult to maintain and repair due to difficulties in sourcing replacement parts, and as a result became more expensive to operate. The condition of the screens continued to deteriorate and they were replaced by fabricated bar screens in late 2004. These screens had to be cleaned manually twice per day and were not as effective as the automatic rotating screens. This unfortunately led to some pollution on the adjourning coastline which Water Service cleaned up.

Pending the construction of the new North Down/Ards Wastewater Treatment Works, which is scheduled for completion by the end of 2007, Water Service replaced the manually raked screens with new automatic screens. As part of the upgrade, a new

water main was laid to the Briggs Rock sea outfall to supply water to clean the new screening plant. During commissioning of the plant in late September 2005, Water Service became aware that this new water supply to the screening plant was causing water pressure problems in the Groomsport area. Water Service responded quickly with temporary measures to return the water pressure in the area to acceptable levels. These measures included reducing water usage at the screening plant to a minimum. However, this means that the new screens cannot operate effectively at all times and new instances of pollution may result under flood conditions. These will be cleared up by Water Service if they occur.

Urgent investigations are underway to identify any water network improvements necessary to retain satisfactory water pressure to the local residents while at the same time enabling the screens to operate effectively. These investigations should be completed by the end of October and Water Service will take immediate action to undertake any remedial work identified.

Broadband Internet Access

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of broadband internet access in Northern Ireland. [20641]

Angela E. Smith: Currently a broadband service is available to 99.15 per cent. of the population. However, as a result of the DETI broadband services contract, by the end of 2005 BT must provide broadband services of at least 512kb to 100 per cent. of businesses and households until 2009.

Cardiology

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cardiac-related emergency cases have been treated in hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21364]

Mr. Woodward: The number of emergency admissions[1] to the cardiac surgery and cardiology specialties, in hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, is detailed in the following table.

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions.

	Total
2000-01	14,608
2001-02	14,120
2002-03	12,969
2003-04	13,708
2004-05	13,701

Source:
Hospital inpatients system

Child Care Costs

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce financial help towards child care costs for NHS funded students in Northern Ireland. [20452]

Mr. Woodward: Significant additional resources would be required to provide financial help towards child care costs for HPSS funded students. Within the prioritisation of the limited resources available, my Department is not in a position to fund such an initiative at present.

Civil Partnership Document

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the total cost of the publication "Civil Partnership: What does it Mean for You" was; and which organisations were consulted in relation to its content; [20768]

(2) what estimate has been made of the number of people in Northern Ireland who will take advantage of the new civil partner status; [20728]

(3) how many copies of the publication "Civil Partnership: What does it Mean for You?" were printed; and if he will make a statement on its circulation in Northern Ireland. [20729]

Angela E. Smith: No official estimate has been made of the number of people in Northern Ireland who will take advantage of the new status of civil partner. The regulatory impact assessment which accompanied the Civil Partnership Act 2004 attempted to estimate the proportion of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population in Great Britain who will be in a civil partnership in 2050. It proceeded on the assumption that 5 percent. of the adult population in Great Britain is lesbian, gay or bisexual. It then examined evidence of take up of comparable partnership schemes in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands and concluded that the take-up would be small, possibly in the region of 5 percent. to 10 percent. of the proportion of the heterosexual population who choose to marry. The legislation, however, has implications for same-sex couples who choose not to form a civil partnership but to live together as if they were civil partners.

1000 copies of the guidance, "Civil Partnership: What does it Mean for You", were printed at a cost of approximately £1,500. Copies have been circulated widely throughout Northern Ireland to political parties, Citizens Advice Bureaux, public libraries and other advice givers in the voluntary sector as well as groups representative of the lesbian and gay community in Northern Ireland. A draft of the guidance was considered by the coalition on sexual orientation, an umbrella group for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community in Northern Ireland. In addition, the guidance is available on the Office of law reform website at www.olrni.gov.uk

Civil Service

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what factors underlay the introduction of new pension arrangements for members of the Northern Ireland civil service from April 2006; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the new arrangements upon current members. [18910]

Angela E. Smith: The Cabinet Office issued a consultation document, proposals for changes to civil service pension arrangements on 9 December 2004.

The consultation document detailed a number of proposed changes to the provision of pension arrangements for the Home civil service, the main aims were to:

make pension provisions which reflect the changing culture in which the remuneration, including pensions, are expected to reflect performance;

address changing employment patterns and provide pension arrangements which fit with emerging patterns of employment;

take account of legislative and other changes which will become effective in the next few years, including tax simplification for pension provision, civil partnerships and anti-age legislation; and

gives Members more flexibility in planning and preparing for retirement.

In the Northern Ireland civil service, the principal civil service pension scheme (Northern Ireland) operates on a policy of parity with the Home civil service scheme, the principal civil service pension scheme, therefore it would be the normal approach of the Northern Ireland civil service to introduce the same pension provisions as apply to the Home civil service.

No decision on new pension arrangements for members of the Northern Ireland civil service has yet been taken. Before a final decision is taken on reform of the pension scheme due consideration will be given to the affect on existing staff.

Co-ownership Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes in the co-ownership scheme there are in each parliamentary constituency in the Province; how many more are planned for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [21201]

Mr. Hanson: Information on co-ownership activity is collected on a district council rather than a constituency basis.

The following table indicates the number of participants currently in the scheme, by district council area, as at 30 September 2005.

It is currently anticipated that 650 participants will be assisted during the financial year 2005–06; however as the scheme is demand led it is not possible to determine the spread of these.

The Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association continues to target those areas where take up of the scheme is lowest.

Council area	*Co-ownership stock*
Antrim	108
Ards	295
Armagh	38
Ballymena	93
Ballymoney	60
Banbridge	85
Belfast	543
Carrickfergus	169
Castlereagh	132
Coleraine	218
Cookstown	53
Craigavon	201
Derry	183
Down	143
Dungannon and South Tyrone	23
Fermanagh	44
Larne	62
Limavady	49
Lisburn	352
Magherafelt	60
Moyle	14
Newry and Mourne	91
Newtownabbey	294
North Down	475
Omagh	44
Strabane	38

Disability Living Allowance

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland are in receipt of disability living allowance high rate case component as well as the high rate mobility component. [21198]

Mr. Hanson: Please note that in answering the question the word case was taken to mean care. The figures requested are shown in the following table and are the most recent information available taken at August 2005.

Parliamentary constituency	*Recipients*
Belfast East	1,050
Belfast North	1,713
Belfast South	1,010
Belfast West	2,677
East Antrim	918
East Londonderry	1,030
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,420
Foyle	2,105
Lagan Valley	1,198
Mid Ulster	1,663
Newry and Armagh	2,049
North Antrim	1,194
North Down	886
South Antrim	1,166
South Down	1,758
Strangford	1,231
Upper Bann	2,022
West Tyrone	2,189
Missing postcode[1]	265
Total	27,544

[1] In producing this analysis, individual records were attributed to wards and parliamentary constituency on the basis of their postcode. Not all records can be correctly allocated to a ward using this method, and some cannot be allocated at all; this occurs when a postcode is recorded incorrectly or is missing.

Drugs/Alcohol

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons under the age of 18 years were admitted to Northern Ireland hospitals for drug-related problems in each of the last five years, broken down by Westminster constituency. [21344]

Mr. Woodward: It is not possible to identify the number of individuals admitted to Northern Ireland hospitals. The following table shows the number of admissions[1] to hospital in Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years, where the patient was under 18 years of age and the diagnosis code corresponded to a drug related illness. Figures are broken down by parliamentary constituency based on the patients area of residence.

[1] Discharges and Deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

Parliamentary constituency	2004–05	2003–04	2002–03	2001–02	2000–01
Unassigned	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0
Belfast East	[1]	[1]	15	[1]	10
Belfast North	[1]	23	20	18	19
Belfast South	0	[1]	11	[1]	[1]
Belfast West	10	18	[1]	[1]	13
East Antrim	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	10
East Londonderry	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	0
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	17
Foyle	[1]	[1]	0	[1]	[1]
Lagan Valley	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Mid Ulster	12	[1]	[1]	12	15
Newry and Armagh	[1]	[1]	12	21	[1]
North Antrim	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
North Down	[1]	[1]	13	11	13
South Antrim	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	10
South Down	[1]	12	13	13	18
Strangford	[1]	[1]	13	[1]	16
Upper Bann	[1]	[1]	11	16	15
West Tyrone	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Total	104	147	155	152	188

[1] Denotes a figure between 1 and 9.

Source:

Hospital Inpatients System

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons under the age of 18 years were admitted to Northern Ireland hospitals for alcohol-related problems in each of the last five years, broken down by Westminster constituency. [21345]

Mr. Woodward: It is not possible to identify the number of individuals admitted to Northern Ireland hospitals. The following table shows the number of admissions[1] to hospital in Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years, where the patient was under 18 years of age and the diagnosis code corresponded to an alcohol related illness. Figures are broken down by parliamentary constituency based on the patients' area of residence.

	Admissions[1]				
Parliamentary constituency	2004–05	2003–04	2002–03	2001–02	2000–01
Unassigned	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Belfast East	10	11	15	12	11
Belfast North	10	16	16	19	10
Belfast South	11	9	15	17	13
Belfast West	18	23	23	26	28
East Antrim	[2]	[2]	[2]	15	[2]
East Londonderry	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	12
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Foyle	10	13	13	[2]	[2]
Lagan Valley	[2]	[2]	[2]	10	[2]
Mid Ulster	16	10	13	[2]	[2]
Newry and Armagh	11	17	12	12	11
North Antrim	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
North Down	[2]	[2]	12	[2]	13
South Antrim	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
South Down	12	15	11	10	18
Strangford	14	[2]	15	[2]	12
Upper Bann	13	[2]	[2]	10	11
West Tyrone	15	12	[2]	10	[2]
Total	181	182	198	192	192

[1] Discharges and Deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

[2] Denotes a figure between 1 and 9.

Source:

Hospital Inpatients System.

Energy Efficiency

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to encourage progress in promoting household energy efficiency in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [21197]

Mr. Hanson: There is sustained activity by the Department for Social Development, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as the Home Energy Conservation Authority for Northern Ireland, and a number of other agencies towards improving domestic energy efficiency across all housing tenures in Northern Ireland. Steps include the warm homes scheme, private sector grants scheme, the Housing Executive's heating replacement and routine house improvement programmes and various energy efficiency initiatives promoted, funded or supported by NIE, the Energy Sayings Trust and others.

The Department and the Housing Executive will continue to work with all relevant bodies to support a wide range of energy efficiency measures and to promote energy efficiency through the provision of energy advice.

Fire-related Deaths

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fire-related deaths there have been in each constituency in the Province in the last three years. [21200]

Mr. Woodward: The number of accidental fire deaths in each of the last three years is as follows:

Constituency	1 April to 31 March 2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Belfast East	—	1	—
Belfast North	1	1	—
Belfast South	—	—	—
Belfast West	1	—	1
East Antrim	1	—	1
East Londonderry	1	1	—
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	—	1	—
Foyle	1	—	2
Lagan Valley	—	—	1
Mid Ulster	1	1	1
Newry and Armagh	—	2	—
North Antrim	1	—	—
North Down	2	—	2
South Antrim	1	1	—
South Down	—	—	—
Strangford	—	2	—
Upper Bann	—	—	—
West Tyrone	—	—	—
Total fatalities	10	10	8

General Practitioners

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioners there are in each of the parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland; and what is the average number of patients listed in each practice. [21614]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency	Number of GPs[1]	Average practice list size[2,3]
Belfast East	65	3,957
Belfast North	88	4,563
Belfast South	65	5,516
Belfast West	54	4,952
East Antrim	42	5,939
East Londonderry	56	5,426
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	71	3,664
Foyle	75	6,969
Lagan Valley	57	6,255
Mid Ulster	43	4,726
Newry and Armagh	70	4,884
North Antrim	74	4,174
North Down	44	6,500
South Antrim	52	5,590
South Down	56	4,016
Strangford	53	4,165
Upper Bann	67	5,165
West Tyrone	53	5,859

[1] Figures are derived from the medlist database maintained by the central services agency, which holds data on the headcount number of individual general practitioners in Northern Ireland. The figures refer to unrestricted principals at 3 October 2005.

[2] Figures are derived from the national health applications and infrastructure services system which holds data on each individual patient registered with a GP in Northern Ireland. Figures refer to 3 October 2005.

[3] Figures are based on the location of each general practice in Northern Ireland.

Hochteif PPP

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have been made in the Hochteif bid for the Bangor Academy and Comber High School private public partnership project since it was first submitted. [19651]

Angela E. Smith: I understand from the Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board that as negotiations in relation to this are still on-going this information is commercial in confidence.

Housing Executive Dwellings

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive dwellings are deemed unfit for occupancy, broken down by housing district; and if he will make a statement. [21196]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the format requested. The rate of unfitness for all housing tenures at the Northern Ireland level was 4.9 percent. in 2001 and 3.8 percent. in 2004. The rate of unfitness in the Housing Executive and housing association sectors is around one per cent. Whilst it is not possible to provide a robust and precise figure below the Northern Ireland level because of the sample size, it is unlikely that there is any significant variation across Housing Executive districts.

With the majority of stock built since 1970, and the relatively high level of resources committed to the maintenance and improvement of social housing, levels of unfitness in both the Housing Executive and housing association sectors has remained minimal. Across all tenures, the unfitness rate remains much higher in isolated rural areas and some inner city areas of Belfast and grant aid and urban renewal will continue to play important roles in reducing unfitness.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive dwellings have been sold to tenants since the scheme was first introduced to Northern Ireland. [21202]

Mr. Hanson: Since sales began in late 1970's some 114,044 dwellings (to the end of September 2005) have been sold to tenants by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive under its house sales scheme.

Inpatients

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes there have been since 2001 in the number of patients waiting more than *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months and *(c)* 18 months for inpatient admission. [21350]

Mr. Woodward: The number of patients waiting *(a)* six months and over, *(b)* 12 months and over, and *(c)* 18 months and over for inpatient admission, including both day cases and ordinary admissions, since June 2001 is shown in the following table.

Number of patients waiting for inpatient admission

	(a) Six months and over	*(b) 12 months and over*	*(c) 18 months and over*
30 June 2001	23,237	12,227	6,877
30 June 2002	27,355	15,074	8,864
30 June 2003	21,744	11,543	6,655
30 June 2004	16,733	6,858	3,230
30 June 2005	12,677	3,969	878

I have set a target to have no patient waiting longer than 12 months for inpatient or day case treatment by 31 March 2006.

Lifeguard Services

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance he has issued to local councils on provision of lifeguard services on beaches, with particular reference to blue-flag beaches. [20531]

Angela E. Smith: The Blue Flag campaign in Northern Ireland is operated by the charity, Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS). Any council participating in this campaign would have to adhere to the guidance issued by that organisation, which is based on the EC Bathing Water Directive.

MRI Scans

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage use of the private sector in the provision of MRI scans in the NHS within Northern Ireland was in the last period for which figures are available. [21349]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will commission research into myalgic encephalomyelitis. [21637]

Mr. Woodward: Myalgic encephalomyelitis is a very complex disorder which produces a broad range of symptoms and disabilities and has various suggested causes and treatments. As such research into diseases like myalgic encephalomyelitis needs to be undertaken in specialised centres of excellence and coordinated at the national level.

The R and D strategy for the health and personal social services, in common with other NHS R and D strategies, does not generally allocate funds for this type of research, however funding for research into myalgic encephalomyelitis has been made available from sources such as the Medical Research Council.

Negligence Claims

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the costs over the next 12 months which might result from clinical negligence in the Province. [20050]

Mr. Woodward: The cost to the Health and Personal Social Services budget is the net impact of the provision being established for new cases reduced by the settlement of existing cases. This is estimated at £11 million in 2005–06.

Northern Ireland Events Company

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the members of the board of the Northern Ireland Events Company were chosen; what their attendance allowance is; and how much funding was given by central Government to the company in each year since its formation. [21248]

Mr. Hanson: The Northern Ireland Events Company's 12 current board members were appointed in 2002. Of these, seven were appointed by open competition, three were co-opted on to the board and two were nominated by outside bodies (Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Sports Council for Northern Ireland). The board members were appointed for three years and this period has been extended by ministerial approval for one year (to June 2006), as allowed by the Code of Practice, issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Events Company board members do not receive an attendance allowance.

The Northern Ireland Events Company has been given central Government funding since its formation as shown in the following table:

	Amount of central Government funding (£)
1997–98	10,000
1998–99	749,690
1999–2000	1,143,000
2000–01	1,100,000
2001–02	1,600,000
2002–03	2,100,000
2003–04	2,458,000
2004–05	1,890,000
2005–06	2,200,000

Nursery Education

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children attended nursery units attached to *(a)* state controlled, *(b)* Catholic maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools in each of the past 10 years. [19942]

Angela E Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupils in nursery units attached to primary schools[1] in Northern Ireland

	Controlled schools	*Catholic maintained schools*	*Integrated schools*
1995/96	2,288	556	46
1996/97	2,328	653	20
1997/98	2,220	763	0

Pupils in nursery units attached to primary schools[1] in Northern Ireland

	Controlled schools	Catholic maintained schools	Integrated schools
1998/99	2,330	994	0
1999/2000	2,704	1,291	26
2000/01	3,313	2,368	259
2001/02	3,671	2,985	330
2002/03	4,004	3,385	365
2003/04	3,970	3,331	377
2004/05	4,095	3,316	388

[1] Pupils in nursery units attached to 'other maintained' primary schools, have not been included.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much investment has been allocated by the Department of Education to nursery units attached to *(a)* state controlled, *(b)* Catholic maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [20160]

Angela E Smith: Under the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme Capital Scheme the amount of funding allocated to nursery units attached to statutory primary schools was as follows:

£000

Financial year	Controlled	Catholic maintained	Integrated primary
1998–99	64	0	0
1999–2000	167	510	32
2000–01	1,195	1,935	328
2001–02	1,366	1,697	206
2002–03	1,210	1,564	162
2003–04	786	1,071	0
2004–05	220	200	0

The above information does not take account of investment in nursery units where these formed an integral part of a major capital work for a primary school. It is not possible to identify separately the level of such investment for the nursery element. Capital investment in nurseries prior to 1998 was not identified separately from investment in primary schools and, therefore, the information is not available for earlier years.

Organ Donation

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase public awareness of organ donor programmes. [21627]

Mr. Woodward: Responsibility for the organ donor register and raising public awareness of organ donor programmes rests with NHS blood and transplant (formerly UK Transplant). They organise national publicity campaigns, which are also run in Northern Ireland. These are supplemented at local and regional level by publicity organised through the Department of Health, social services and public safety and the transplant co-ordinators based in Belfast City hospital.

Following on from the "Life's Amazing, Pass It On" campaign in 2004 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the organ donor register, 510 local pharmacies have agreed to display copies of a "Signed Up Yet?" leaflet in a joint initiative between Northern Ireland's pharmaceutical contractors' committee and NHS blood and transplant. A major publicity campaign is also being organised for December 2005 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the world's first successful cornea transplant.

The success in raising public awareness locally is demonstrated by the increase in the percentage of the Northern Ireland population who are now members of the organ donor register: 17.7 percent. as compared to 9 percent. in 2003.

Oversea Students

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many overseas students studied at Northern Ireland's universities in each of the past five years. [20647]

Angela E Smith: The number of enrolments at NI Higher Education Institutions by students whose domicile was recorded as a country outside the UK or Republic of Ireland for the past five years are set out in the following table.

	Domicile		
Academic year	EU (excluding UK and RoI)	Other overseas	Total
1999/2000	659	887	1,546
2000/01	363	1,261	1,624
2001/02	311	1,358	1,669
2002/03	397	1,476	1,873
2003/04	381	1,553	1,934

Source:
HESA

Patient Choice

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on Government policies to increase choice for NHS patients in Northern Ireland. [21351]

Mr. Woodward: On 4 July I announced a major programme of reform to address Northern Ireland's unacceptable waiting times. As part of this announcement, I indicated my intention to make greater use of the independent sector. Experience locally and in the rest of the United Kingdom has shown that independent sector providers can offer additional choice to patients as well as providing an opportunity to showcase new and innovative ways of working.

Later this year, the Department will also announce more detailed plans to reform the delivery of outpatient services.

The Department is also working to promote choice and independence in social care. The extension of the direct payments scheme will provide service users and carers with opportunities to choose both the services they need and how they access them.

Romania (Adoptions)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many adoptions from Romania home study assessments have been carried out in each of the last 10 years. [20534]

Mr. Woodward: All adoptions from Romania in the last 10 years have had a home study assessment carried out. The number of adoptions in each year is set out in the following table.

	Number of adoptions
1995	0
1996	0
1997	0
1998	2
1999	1
2000	5
2001	5
2002	0
2003	0
2004	0
2005	0

School Nurses/Dentists

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure that every child in Northern Ireland has access to *(a)* school nurse and *(b)* community dentist. [20648]

Mr. Woodward: School nursing services are provided by all community health and social care trusts in Northern Ireland. The service is provided to all schools, except a very small number of voluntary and independent grammar schools, which fall outside the statutory requirement for service provision. In addition, a number of schools employ nurses as part of their team to provide first aid and support pupils.

Every child in Northern Ireland has access to health service dentistry. The health service provides a full range of dental services through general dental practitioners working in the general dental service. The role of the community dental service is not to provide universal access to treatment but to facilitate patients who are otherwise unable to obtain treatment through the general dental service. It also carries out dental screening of schoolchildren, dental education and prevention programmes and monitoring and planning of local dental services.

Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the South Eastern Education and Library Board has for the merging of Dundonald High School and Knockbreda High School. [20509]

Angela E. Smith: I have been advised that the South-Eastern Education and Library Board has currently no plans to amalgamate Dundonald High and Knockbreda High Schools.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils attended *(a)* state controlled, *(b)* Catholic maintained and *(c)* integrated secondary schools in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [19944]

Angela E Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupils in secondary schools[1] in Northern Ireland

	Controlled schools	*Catholic maintained schools*	*Integrated schools[2]*
1995/96	40,925	46,718	2,783
1996/97	40,492	46,521	3,554
1997/98	40,154	46,165	4,308
1998/99	38,871	45,936	6,677
1999/2000	38,961	45,643	7,691
2000/01	38,577	45,382	8,688
2001/02	38,163	45,008	9,247
2002/03	37,710	44,811	9,760
2003/04	37,289	44,275	10,077
2004/05	36,398	42,946	10,299

[1] Data for pupils at 'other maintained' secondary schools and at grammar schools have been excluded.
[2] Includes both controlled integrated schools and grant maintained integrated schools.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much investment has been allocated by the Department of Education to *(a)* state controlled, *(b)* Catholic maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools in Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [20161]

Angela E Smith: The following table sets out the capital investment for major works allocated by the Department of Education for primary schools in the state controlled, Catholic maintained and integrated sectors, for each of the 10 financial years from 1995–96 to 2004–05. The investment figures take account of nursery units where these were an integral part of the major capital work for the primary school. It is not possible to provide separate figures for the primary school element.

	Number of controlled primary schools	*Total capital investment in controlled primary schools (£ million)*	*Number of Catholic maintained primary schools*	*Total capital investment in Catholic maintained primary schools (£ million)*	*Number of integrated primary schools*	*Total capital investment in integrated primary schools (£ million)*
1995–96	5	8.0	4	8.3	1	2.8
1996–97	3	6.1	3	5.1	—	—
1997–98	4	4.9	2	4.9	2	3.6
1998–99	2	3.8	2	3.1	—	—
1999–2000	3	4.8	4	9.1	1	0.3
2000–01	5	10.2	5	15.6	1	1.4
2001–02	9	16.3	6	19.9	—	—
2002–03	7	16.2	5	10.0	2	3.6
2003–04	13	40.0	4	9.6	3	6.3
2004–05	13	35.2	15	38.4	2	5.3
Total	64	145.5	50	124	12	23.3

Smoking Ban

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Department for Health on the decision to ban smoking in enclosed work places in Northern Ireland. [20419]

Mr. Woodward: No formal ministerial discussions have taken place with the Department of Health about the decision to introduce comprehensive controls on where people smoke in enclosed public places and work places in Northern Ireland by April 2007, however there were informal ministerial discussions prior to my announcement of smoking controls for Northern Ireland. Officials from UK Health Departments meet regularly to discuss areas of mutual interest in the field of tobacco control policy.

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what steps have been taken by his Department to review its arrangements for public reporting of its sustainable development impacts; [18444]

(2) what arrangements his Department has to report publicly on its key sustainable development impacts. [18445]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment (DOE) is taking the lead in developing the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland which is programmed to launch on 13 December 2005.

Incorporated within the strategy will be a set of commitments specific to Northern Ireland which will address some of the key social, economic and environmental issues.

The strategy will be followed by a series of implementation plans which will use lower level objectives, targets and indicators to help translate the strategy into action on the ground and which will permit progress to be measured.

The specific arrangements for publishing progress against the indicators will be addressed within the strategy document which is currently being developed.

Data from Northern Ireland will also contribute to the UK headline indicators of sustainable development as part of our commitment to the overarching UK Framework for sustainable development "One future—different paths' launched in March 2005.

Ulster Historical Foundation

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide the Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF) with the funding required to make UHF research papers accessible to the public. [19937]

Mr. Hanson: The UHF are in the process of establishing whether there would be sufficient demand for access to their research papers to justify expenditure in this area and are planning to bid for lottery funding should the demand exist.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Finance

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he could list his Department's bilateral aid by sector to *(a)* sexual and reproductive health/population and to *(b)* HIV under the headings (i) project, (ii) programme, (iii) technical, (iv) grants, (v) humanitarian aid and (vi) CDC investments for 2004–05; [20710]

(2) what aid his Department has provided for reproductive health programmes in each of the last five years; [20820]

(3) if he will list his Department's bilateral aid to family planning programmes in each of the last five years. [20821]

Mr. Thomas: The data on HIV and reproductive health spending in 2004–05 is not yet available. Expenditure figures are being collated and we expect to be able to publish them shortly. We also want to make sure that these figures will be consistent, for the purpose of making accurate comparisons, with previous years spending. We will therefore report on the whole time series, including spending in previous years, when we finalise the 2004–05 figures. I will write to the hon. Member for Calder Valley when the spending analysis is complete.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's total expenditure was in 2004–05 to *(a)* UNFPA, *(b)* WHO, *(c)* UNICEF, *(d)* UNAIDS, *(e)* International Planned Parenthood Federation, *(f)* Marie Stopes International and *(g)* Interact Worldwide; and if he will make a statement. [20711]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's total expenditure in 2004–05 for the international Planned Parenthood Federation was £6,000,000, for the Marie Stopes International, £1,698,000 and for Interact Worldwide £474,000.

With regards to total expenditure for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), our statistical system does not disaggregate payments made to individual agencies at the country level. Contributions made centrally through DFID's multilateral programme to these agencies in 2004–05 were: to the UNFPA £20,038,000, the WHO £27,649,000, UNICEF £19,771,000 and UNAIDS £8,069,000.

As part of an exercise looking at funding across the United Nations during the calendar year of 2004, the agencies were asked to confirm total DFID contributions, including those made through our bilateral programme at country level. These were for the UNFPA £22,700,000, for the WHO £54,725,725, for UNICEF £102,152,173 and for UNAIDS £9,410,194.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's contribution to the Human Reproduction Programme in the World Health Organisation was in *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03, *(d)* 2003–04 and *(e)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [20712]

Mr. Thomas: Since 2003–04, we have provided support to the Human Reproduction Programme (HRP) through and as part of our overall core contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO), leaving it to the WHO to determine the allocation of resources for its various areas of work, including HRP. For 2000–01, we provided £750,000 to HRP; for 2001–02, £576,000; and for 2002–03, £250,000. We are currently reviewing the arrangements for our support to HRP.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding his Department allocated to sexual and reproductive health non-governmental organisations in 2004–05. [20793]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provided support to NGOs working in sexual and reproductive health in a number of ways in 2004–05. We provided central support to organisations such as the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF), to advocate for and provide sexual and reproductive health services (£6 million) to the Population Council for work to promote adolescent sexual health (£921,000) and to the International Projects Assistance Services (IPAS), for work to address unsafe abortion (£722,000).

Through our Civil Society Challenge Fund and country programmes, we also provided support to Interact Worldwide (£474,000) and the Marie Stopes International (MSI) (£1.69 million) to extend service provision and also to Population Services International (£11.9 million) to expand social marketing. We also provided support for a range of other reproductive health NGOs including the Alan Guttmacher Institute, Engender Health, Global Campaign for Microbicides/ PATH, Family Care International and Reproductive Health Matters.

G8 Action Plan for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the timetable is for drafting the G8 Action Plan for Africa; and what role his Department has in the process. [22007]

Hilary Benn: The G8 published a joint progress report in July on the G8 Action Plan for Africa agreed at the Kananaskis Summit in 2002. At the time, DFID published a report specifically on the UK's progress. At Gleneagles, G8 and African Leaders agreed that there should be a Joint Action Plan, covering commitments by Africa and all its development partners (not just the G8) and tasked the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) to monitor implementation.

In London on 4–5 October, the APF agreed to establish a Joint Action Plan by its next meeting in April 2006. The draft Plan is being developed by a Task Team including APF co-chairs for 2005 and 2006: the UK, Nigeria, the Netherlands, Russia, Norway and the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Department for International Development is participating in this process on behalf of the UK and in consultation with other relevant Government departments.

HIV/AIDS

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what monitoring has taken place of funds allocated for HIV/AIDS orphan and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa. [21102]

Mr. Thomas: Monitoring of progress on HIV/AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) spend in our 16 Public Service Agreement countries in Africa takes place through annual reviews of progress against DFID Country Assistance Plans and the Africa Directors Delivery Plan. Overall progress is reported in the annual Departmental Report. Progress is also tracked through bi-annual monitoring of the UK HIV/AIDS Strategy 'Taking Action' and ad hoc monitoring missions on OVC issues.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the organisations that have received funds to provide services for HIV/AIDS orphan and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa in 2005–06. [21150]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides most of its aid directly to the Governments of developing countries, either through non-earmarked Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support (PRBS) or earmarked sector support. Given that many other organisations in those countries will subsequently receive funds, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of those NGOs providing services to HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children.

Under appropriate circumstances, DFID also funds NGOs directly. NGOs receiving such support include ActionAid, Terre des Hommes, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Save the Children UK, Christian Aid and CARE.

To complement our country level support, DFID also channels funds through multilateral bodies such as UNICEF. In South Africa for example we are supporting UNICEF to implement South Africa's National Action Plan for children affected by AIDS.

Liberia

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the UK Government's total financial contribution to the peace-keeping operation in Liberia has been. [21065]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government's total contribution to the Liberia peacekeeping operation (UNMIL) has been £68,854,123 to the end of September 2005. By financial year, the figures are as follows:

	£
2003–04	
Assessed	16,629,154
Non-assessed	15,061
2004–05	
Assessed	35,000,083
Non-assessed	497,828
2005–06 (half year)	
Assessed	16,527,941
Non-assessed	184,056

In addition to these FCO contributions, DFID's total support to Liberia since the signing of the Accra Peace Accord in 2003 has been £18.5 million. £3,967,000 was provided to the UN Trust Fund for disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and re-integration, which forms a critical part of the peacekeeping operation. A further £1.4 million financed UNICEF for Education and Re-integration programmes for Children Associated with the Fighting Forces. In addition £900,000 supported the provision of humanitarian air services, support to the UN Joint Logistical Centre, emergency trucking and communication equipment. The remainder has supported voluntary relief agencies in meeting basic humanitarian needs. Additional assistance is being planned.

Millennium Development Goals

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on *(a)* global progress and *(b)* work being done by his Department towards reaching the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people with no access to clean water by 2015. [20615]

Mr. Thomas: From the latest figures made available by the Joint Monitoring Programme, implemented by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the world is on track to meet the drinking water target of halving, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water. It should be added however that there are major regional differences in progress with sub-Saharan Africa being off track to achieve the water target by 2015.

DFID's actions to meet the challenge of achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water supply, sanitation and water resource management are set out in the Water action Plan published in March 2004. With sub-Saharan Africa making insufficient progress towards achievement of the target for access to safe water, the Secretary of State for International Development announced on World Water Day, 22 March, a doubling of DFID's aid to Africa for water and an increase in the engagement of DFID's country offices with their partner country Governments on this issue. The Water Action Plan and updates on progress against the actions set out and on the commitments made on World Water Day are available on DFID's website www.dfid.gov.uk

Sierra Leone

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money is planned to be spent on public relations initiatives in the Department's technical assistance contract in Sierra Leone. [20616]

Hilary Benn: DFID does not have a specific technical assistance contract in Sierra Leone as such. Technical Assistance is an integral part of most of what DFID is doing in the country to strengthen the government's ability to deliver services to its citizens. As a result of the long years of war in the 1990s when many educated people fled the country, limited capacity is a major development constraint.

There is a communications element of the planned project providing support to the Sierra Leone National Commission for Privatisation. The project design includes a provision of £50,000 (some 2.5 per cent. of the total project cost) for communications as one of the aims of the project is to provide good quality public information and increase the transparency and accountability of the reform process. DFID agrees with local NGOs that there is a real need for good quality public information in Sierra Leone. The public needs to be kept accurately informed and consulted at an early stage in looking at different options in the reform process.

The project design also provides for a communications adviser to help develop an overall strategy. However, DFID has made it clear that we will not fund any campaign to promote privatisation.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what is his latest assessment of the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. [21824]

Hilary Benn: Credible independent estimates suggest that between three and five million people will face serious food shortages over the coming months. This is mainly as a result of bad governance by the Government of Zimbabwe, combined with erratic rains and the impact of HIV/AIDS which are also affecting neighbouring countries. The World Food Programme, with support from DFID and other donors, is presently providing food aid for one million vulnerable Zimbabweans, mainly children. Operations will be scaled up as hunger becomes more widespread in the months before the next harvest.

In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe's forced clearance of unauthorised dwellings earlier this year, Operation Murambatsvina ("Clean Up"), displaced or destroyed the livelihoods of 700,000 people, aggravating poverty and food shortages in both urban and rural areas. The Zimbabwe Government's own efforts to mitigate the suffering caused by their mass evictions have been limited, and in some instances, the Government has obstructed the wider humanitarian effort, for example by refusing to accept the provision of tents and other temporary shelters for those without shelter. Despite these difficulties, a range of UN and non-governmental agencies are operating relief programmes reaching 40,000 affected households, including those affected by HIV and AIDS, with supplies of food, blankets, medical care and other essential items.

DFID has provided over £100 million in humanitarian support to Zimbabwe since the onset of the food crisis in September 2001. All funding is channelled through UN agencies and NGOs, who ensure that assistance reaches those who need it most.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Big Lottery Fund

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the projects that have unsuccessfully applied for grants from the Big Lottery Fund in the past 12 months; and for what reasons each application was turned down. [21083]

Mr. Caborn: The information requested is not readily available to me. It will require a degree of work to collate and I expect that the subsequent response is longer than *Hansard* would normally publish. I have therefore asked the chief executive of the Fund to write to the right hon. Member and I will place copies of his response in the Libraries of both Houses.

Child Obesity

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of five-year-olds she expects will be participating in two hours or more of sport or physical activity in school by *(a)* 2006 and *(b)* 2008; and if she will make a statement. [21484]

Mr. Caborn: The results of the 2004–05 school sport survey confirmed that we are on track to deliver the Public Service Agreement Target—shared with the Department for Education and Skills—to increase the percentage of five to 16-year-olds in England who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and to 85 per cent. by 2008.

The survey showed that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils in partnership schools were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport in a typical week—an 11 per cent. increase from the 2003–04 survey.

The results of the 2004–05 school sports survey—the largest survey of its kind in Europe—were published on 2 September. A copy of the survey report "The Results of the 2004–05 School Sport Survey" has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Spending

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial support her Department has given to each of the *(a)* executive non-departmental public bodies, *(b)* advisory bodies and *(c)* public corporations for which her Department is responsible in each year since 1997. [21085]

Mr. Lammy: Details of the financial support provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to each of its executive non-departmental public bodies, advisory bodies and public corporations can be found in the Department's annual reports, specifically:

Pages 195–108 of the 1999 Annual Report (Cm 4213) published in March 1999;

Pages 108–110 of the 2002 Annual Report Review (Cm 5423) published in May 2002; and

Pages 71–73 of the 2004 Annual Report Review (Cm 6220) Published in April 2004.

Copies are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to her Department. [21010]

Mr. Lammy: Recruitment is on a competency based assessment. All new recruits are subject to a eight months' probation period during which time their progress made in meeting the competence requirements of their grade is continuously assessed. Where any skill gaps are identified training will be provided.

Digital Television

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households do not have access to digital television in each London constituency; and if she will make a statement. [21993]

James Purnell: The vast majority of households in the UK can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via at least one of digital satellite, digital terrestrial, cable or DSL broadband.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but the Government are committed to ensuring that at digital switchover everyone in the UK who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them on digital systems.

Libraries (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* books, *(b)* DVDs, *(c)* video cassettes, *(d)* computer games and *(e)* audio books have been available in library service stock in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley in each year since 1997. [21688]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The information is not held centrally. However, the table shows, respectively, the total bookstock and the total numbers of audio visual, electronic and other types of stock held by Lancashire libraries since 1997–98. The comparable figures for public libraries in the Ribble Valley constituency are not held centrally.

	Bookstock	*Total audio, visual, electronic and other stock*
1997–98	3,104,255	[1]
1998–99	2,561,136	[1]
1999–2000	2,486,056	190,106
2000–01	2,386,475	[1]
2001–02	2,316,941	[1]
2002–03	2,309,233	120,411
2003–04	2,184,021	134,463

[1] No return received from Lancashire libraries.

Source:

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy—Public library statistics (Actuals)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money was collected in public library fines in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley in each of the last five years. [21689]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 25 October 2005]*: The public library statistics, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for the past five years shows the following amounts of overdue fines per 1,000 population collected by Lancashire libraries as in the following table. The corresponding resident population figures for the areas served by Lancashire libraries for those years are also shown. Comparable figures for the public libraries in the Ribble Valley constituency are not held centrally.

	Overdue fines collected by Lancashire libraries per 1,000 population (£)	*Resident population*
1999–2000	234	1,137,100
2000–01	227	1,140,700
2001–02	234	1,135,000
2002–03	243	1,140,500
2003–04	248	1,147,000

Licensed Premises

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will put in place emergency measures to compensate licensed premises whose new licences have not been processed by 24 November; and if she will make a statement; [20409]

(2) what assessment she has made of the likely financial impact per month of a suspension in trading by those establishments who will not have an alcohol licence by 24 November in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales; and if she will make a statement. [20410]

James Purnell: To qualify for the conversion of their existing alcohol licences, premises licensed under the existing licensing framework should have submitted applications between 7 February and 6 August 2005. The Licensing Act stipulates that, should any such applications not have been processed within two months, the appropriate licences are deemed to have been granted.

The Act includes these safeguards to ensure that the issue of licences is not delayed due to the pressure of work on licensing authorities. All premises which have applied in time for the conversion of existing licences will have licences to trade after the Second Appointed Day. I have not, therefore, carried out any assessment of the possible economic effects of unprocessed applications. Nor do I consider that emergency compensation measures are necessary.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department was notified by *(a)* the Magistrates' Association and *(b)* the Justices Clerks' Association of potential problems in magistrates' courts of dealing promptly with appeals in respect of the Licensing Act 2003; what steps have been taken to deal with such problems; and if she will make a statement. [20513]

James Purnell: My Department holds regular meetings with the Magistrates' Association and the Justices' Clerks' Society, the last being on 27 July 2005. Likely workloads arising from appeals against licensing authorities' decisions have been discussed at these meetings.

I have a great deal of confidence in the ability of the Courts to deal adequately with the administrative workloads arising from any appeals. However, my Department is monitoring the position closely, in conjunction with the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Licensing Act

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in implementing the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [21470]

James Purnell: Good progress has been made in implementing the Licensing Act 2003. It has been estimated that close to 97 per cent. of expected applications for premises licences and club premises certificates have been submitted. The local authorities believe that the remaining 3 per cent. include a small number of businesses who have not yet applied and those premises who may not, in the event, want to obtain a licence (e.g. small guest houses). The Government are confident that the Act is now ready for final implementation on 24 November.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what contribution her Department is making to the Government's measures to tackle binge drinking; and if she will make a statement. [21471]

James Purnell: The Government believe that current fixed opening hours encourage patrons to binge drink and the Licensing Act 2003, which takes effect on 24 November, will enable a greater variety of premises to adopt flexible hours and so remove the need for some patrons to drink as much as possible before the pubs and bars close.

The Act also provides the police with a raft of new powers for tackling disorderly and criminal behaviour on licensed premises and to apply for reviews of licences where drunkenness and disorderly behaviour are prevalent.

The Licensing Act is part of a wider strategy on binge drinking, including the Violent Crime Reduction Bill and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.

My Department will closely monitor and evaluate the impact of the Act on crime and disorder to ensure that the Act delivers on our promise to provide a more civilised late night society.

Music Lessons

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the provision of music lessons in maintained schools. [21463]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

The National Curriculum provides all children aged 5–14 with a statutory entitlement to music lessons, giving them the opportunity to sing, to play musical instruments, to hear live and recorded music from a range of traditions and styles, to compose and to perform. Music can then be taken as an option at GCSE.

Ofsted reports, over several years, show an improvement in teaching and learning across all key stages.

Parliamentary Counsel

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from her Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20106]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is not collected.

Stolen Antiquities

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to prevent stolen antiquities being sold in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [21485]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is currently undertaking a number of projects designed to help combat the illicit trade in stolen antiquities.

We recently published guidelines for museums, libraries and archives on the acquisition of cultural property, to help them ensure that their acquisitions are both legal and ethical. We are also funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to produce a website offering advice to anyone wishing to purchase art and antiquities, to help them avoid purchasing illegally traded cultural property.

Television Licences

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many unpaid television licences there were in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley. [21686]

James Purnell *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The BBC has responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the Corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's head of revenue management to consider the questions raised by the hon. Member and to write to him direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in each constituency have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* jailed for failure to pay the television licence fee in the last 12 months. [21355]

James Purnell: Information on prosecutions and imprisonment by parliamentary constituency is not held centrally. Television licence evasion is not punishable by imprisonment but only by a fine, although the courts have the power to imprison fine defaulters.

The available data relates to all offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts of 1949 and 1967 in England and Wales, and to all offences under the 1949 Act in Scotland, most though not all of which involve television licence evasion. The number of people proceeded against for such offences in England, Scotland and Wales in 2003, the latest year for which information is available, was 96,872. The number of people imprisoned for default on fines imposed for such offences was 46 in 2004.

SCOTLAND

Correspondence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many letters to his Office from hon. Members in session *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 remain unanswered, broken down by those which are (i) one month old, (ii) two months old, (iii) three months old, (iv) four months old and (v) over six months old. [13847]

David Cairns: The numbers of letters to the Scotland Office from hon. Members that remain unanswered are as follows:

	Number of unanswered letters
2004–05:	
One month old	0
Two months old	0
Three months old	0
Four months old	0
Over six months old	1
2005–06:	
One month old	0
Two months old	0
Three months old	1
Four months old	0
Over six months old	0

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

Drugs Approval

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many drugs approved by the EU Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use await approval of the Scottish Medicines Consortium; [19895]

(2) how many cancer drugs approved by the EU Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use await approval of the Scottish Medicines Consortium. [19896]

David Cairns: Responsibility for the work of the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) lies with Scottish Ministers. I understand the SMC is currently working towards production of a definitive list of drugs cleared by the EU Committee but not yet through the consortium's approval process.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he anticipates Herceptin will be available to patients in Scotland for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. [19904]

David Cairns: This is a devolved matter, however I understand that the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) expects to receive a submission from Roche, the manufacturer of Herceptin, once the licence has been

approved. On receipt of a submission SMC will begin their assessment process. Normally this process would take 18 weeks.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17880]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has not offered any volunteering positions in the last five years but the office participates in the pupil work placement schemes operated by the Scottish Executive.

Through their parent Departments—the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs—staff in the Scotland Office may take one day's paid leave each year to undertake voluntary work.

HEALTH

Ambulance Service Medal

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to nominate ambulance personnel for the Queen's Ambulance Service Medal following the performance of the service during the London bombing on 7 July. [20415]

Jane Kennedy: The Government recognises the enormous contribution of our emergency services, including London Ambulance Service national health service Trust, on 7 July 2005 and is exploring a number of options for ensuring that this is properly recognised.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effects on public health of asylum seekers being unable to access NHS services apart from accident and emergency.[20445]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Primary care trusts have a duty to ensure that asylum seekers, as with all members of the public, can access national health service services. A person who has formally applied for asylum is entitled to NHS treatment, both primary and secondary care, without charge, for as long as their application, including appeals, is under consideration. This includes registering with a general practitioner and receiving treatment in a hospital.

Communicable Disease Control

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has *(a)* to amend the powers exercised as a last resort over people, premises and property in circumstances posing a risk to public health and *(b)* to change the reserve powers available to her in the event that an outbreak of communicable disease is being mishandled. [20030]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 contains a range of powers in relation to the control of infectious disease. As to plans to review this legislation, I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 189–90W.

Emergency powers under part two of the Civil Contingencies Act are designed to allow the Government to respond quickly and effectively to the most serious emergencies where existing powers prove to be insufficient. They are capable of being used in the event of a range of emergencies, including those involving threats to public health, but only where existing powers would be ineffective. Their use is a last resort option—other approaches, such as bringing forward new legislation in an accelerated timeframe, would be considered first.

The Act allows the making of temporary legislation—emergency regulations—in exceptional circumstances and only where the robust tests and safeguards in the Act are met. Such temporary legislation may amend existing powers or grant new ones where this is necessary and proportionate. In order to meet these tests any use of emergency powers must be tailored to the specific circumstances at hand. It is therefore not possible, and would be potentially misleading, to comment on any specific measures that could be taken using emergency powers in the event of a public health emergency—it would depend on the specific circumstances prevailing at the time.

Contaminated Surgical Instruments

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital acquired infections were caused by contaminated surgical instruments in the last period for which figures are available. [19391]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Information on the number of hospital acquired infections caused by contaminated surgical instruments is not available.

Down's Syndrome

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been undertaken into the effects of complementary therapies for people with Down's syndrome. [18311]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not funded any such research.

Influenza Vaccinations

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate for influenza vaccinations for each *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* primary care trust in London was in each year since 2002–03. [18653]

Jane Kennedy: This information requested is shown in the table.

Percentage of 'flu vaccine uptake in people aged 65 years and over by strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trust (PCT)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
North East London SHA			
Barking and Dagenham PCT	66	71	72
Havering PCT	71	73	73
City and Hackney PCT	53	55	59

Percentage of 'flu vaccine uptake in people aged 65 years and over by strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trust (PCT)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Newham PCT	60	67	65
Tower Hamlets PCT	60	61	71
Redbridge PCT	—	71	71
Waltham Forest	—	71	72
Mean SHA	62	67	69
North Central London SHA			
Barnet PCT	62	66	66
Enfield PCT	67	66	65
Haringey PCT	61	72	70
Camden PCT	59	58	64
Islington PCT	56	60	62
Mean SHA	61	64	65
South East London SHA			
Bexley PCT	67	71	68
Greenwich PCT	59	61	62
Bromley PCT	68	69	70
Lambeth PCT	49	53	59
Southwark PCT	49	54	54
Lewisham PCT	56	58	61
Mean SHA	58	61	62
South West London SHA			
Kingston PCT	67	70	72
Richmond and Twickenham PCT	67	69	73
Sutton and Merton PCT	70	70	71
Wandsworth PCT	63	70	66
Croydon PCT	65	66	68
Mean SHA	66	69	70
North West London SHA			
Ealing PCT	73	65	68
Hounslow PCT	66	74	71
Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	54	56	61
Hillingdon PCT	60	66	70
Brent PCT	61	69	71
Harrow PCT	69	72	73
Westminster PCT	51	55	62
Kensington and Chelsea PCT	61	64	72
Mean SHA	62	65	69

London Ambulance Service

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role primary care trust patients' forums will undertake in the pan-London review of the performance of the London Ambulance Service. [17578]

Jane Kennedy: At the present time, the performance of the London Ambulance Service (LAS) will continue to be monitored by the LAS patients' forum. Primary care trust patients' forums will contribute to that review as they have been doing.

Lupus

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been made available for research into lupus from *(a)* the Medical Research Council and *(b)* the Department of Health's Research and Development Directorate in each year since 1997. [18364]

Jane Kennedy: The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a significant number concerned with lupus, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC's portfolio of research relating to the causes and treatment of inflammatory disease has included the following expenditure specifically on lupus:

	Amount (£)
2000–01	96,000
2002–03	65,000
2003–04	112,000

Market Research

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been paid to *(a)* opinion leader research and *(b)* all market research companies by her Department in each of the last eight years. [18830]

Jane Kennedy: A list of expenditure on market research in each of the last eight years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Medical Errors/Incidents

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* medical errors and *(b)* reportable incidents involving (i) drugs and (ii) equipment in NHS hospitals in London there were in each year since 1997. [16907]

Jane Kennedy: It is only possible to provide data on the number of reportable incidents involving drugs and equipment. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) operates national systems for the collection and monitoring information of adverse events related to drugs and devices. Both systems rely upon voluntary reporting of suspected adverse events by health professionals. Manufacturers with respect to devices and marketing authorisation holders with respect to drugs have statutory obligations to report suspected adverse events.

Table one shows the total number of suspected adverse drug reaction (ADR) reports received via the voluntary yellow card scheme from 1997 to 2005 by year from London hospitals.

Table 1: Reports received via the yellow card scheme from London hospitals

	Number
1997	690
1998	837
1999	891
2000	941
2001	860
2002	789
2003	791
2004	866
2005[1]	762

[1] Data up to 10 October 2005.

The MHRA pharmacovigilance system does not differentiate between national health service and private hospitals. The number of reports received from London hospitals, therefore, includes day hospitals, private hospitals and hospitals that may now be closed. It is

important to note that a report of an adverse drug reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the drug. Many factors have to be taken into account in assessing causal relationships, including temporal association, the possible contribution of concomitant medication and the underlying disease.

Table two shows the number of medical device related adverse incident reports submitted to the MHRA from the NHS in London on a voluntary basis between mid-1999 and 2005. Information obtainable from electronic records created prior to mid-1999 does not distinguish reports from the NHS in London.

Table 2: Medical device related adverse incident reports submitted to the MHRA from the NHS in London

	Number of reports received from London hospitals
1999	226
2000	426
2001	422
2002	483
2003	459
2004	355
2005	[1]239

[1] Data up to 12 October 2005

Mental Health Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people the Government estimates will be placed under compulsory community-based treatment orders under the provisions in the draft Mental Health Bill *(a)* once the Mental Health Bill is passed and *(b)* (i) five, (ii) 15 and (iii) 20 years after the Bill is passed. [18798]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government's modelling assumption is that around 10 per cent. of treatment orders will be community based in the early years of the new Mental Health Act. In preparing for the introduction of the new Act, the focus should be on ensuring the appropriate use of community-based treatment by professionals, rather than arbitrarily defining numbers of those who should be subject to it.

NHS Estates

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2835–36W, on NHS Estates, what the *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* timetable are for the wider review of regulation in health and social care. [20599]

Jane Kennedy: I gave details of the wider review of regulation on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns. 56–57WS. The review will be conducted by officials from the Department of Health, with external scrutiny and challenge provided by a regulation review panel, comprising Lord Currie of Marylebone (chair), Dr. Dieter Helm of New College Oxford, and Mr. Robert Chilton, acting chair of the National Consumers Council. I shall provide a further update in the new year.

NICE (Drug Approvals)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time has been for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to approve a cancer drug. [19868]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham (Mr. Hands) on 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 734W.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the shortest time is that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has taken to approve a cancer drug having received formal approval from the European Medicines Evaluation Agency. [19911]

Jane Kennedy: The shortest time the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has taken to approve a cancer drug, having received formal approval from the European Medicines Evaluation Agency (EMEA), was 11 months for leukaemia (chronic myeloid)—imatinib. Imatinib was licensed by the EMEA on 1 November 2001 and NICE guidance was published in October 2002. A copy of this guidance is available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will refer to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence the use of Herceptin to treat breast cancer in patients already diagnosed with the disease and who are at high risk of recurrence. [19974]

Jane Kennedy: The Government have asked the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to conduct an appraisal of the clinical and cost effectiveness of Herceptin for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. Herceptin is not yet licensed for early stage breast cancer in England and NICE cannot complete its appraisal until the drug receives its license for this indication.

Patientline

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the services offered by Patientline to patients in NHS hospitals; what the cost of each service is, including the cost of making incoming calls to Patientline telephones; on which date Patientline first started supplying services to the NHS; which other suppliers of *(a)* televisions, *(b)* telephones and *(c)* other entertainment services have contracts to supply NHS trusts; and what assessment she has made of the degree of competition between suppliers in providing such services. [18367]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows Patientline's services for patients in national health service hospitals.

Service	*Cost*
At least 16 television channels and bedside telephone	£3.50 per 24 hours
Concession for the over 60's	£1.70 per 24 hours
Concession for long stay patients (over two weeks)	£1.70 per 24 hours
All TV channels for children (under 16)	Free
One hour breakfast TV	Free
Radio	Free
Hospital information channel	Free

Service	Cost
Charge for the outgoing call from the patient's terminal	10 pence per minute (minimum 20 pence)
Internet and e-mail	Four pence per minute
Video games	30 pence each

Incoming telephone call charges from United Kingdom landlines are 39 pence per minute off peak rate—between 6 pm and 8 am Monday to Friday and all weekend—and 49 pence per minute peak rate—all other times. Patientline's calls to mobile phones and overseas calls vary in accordance with the network provider's terms and conditions.

The first Patientline hospital became operational in 1995.

There are three other suppliers of the television and telephone services. They are Premier Managed Payphones, Hospital Telephone Services (HTS) and the Wandsworth Group.

It is the responsibility of the NHS trust to assess the suppliers in the market and choose the most appropriate one to meet their local circumstances and needs.

The Office of Communications has opened an investigation into the provision of bedside communication and entertainment services recently installed in NHS hospitals under the Competition Act 1998. The Department is co-operating with this investigation.

Rapid Review Panel

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what systems are in place to fast-track resubmissions of products to the Rapid Review Panel following their initial submission and rejection. [18343]

Jane Kennedy: No such procedures are in place as all applications are dealt with in order of receipt. The rapid review panel meets every three months and does not have a backlog of applications.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether regulatory impact assessment was carried out on the Wave 2 Supply Chain Excellence Programme. [16576]

Jane Kennedy: The supply chain excellence programme (SCEP) consists of four projects, one of which is national contracts procurements (NCP). This project is being conducted in two waves. All work carried out under the NCP project first has a full opportunity assessment and approval from the SCEP's departmental board. A regulatory impact assessment was not carried out for the whole of the second wave as it does not require any changes to existing Regulations and is consistent with the Department's objectives to improve efficiencies in the national health service supply chain.

South West London Orthopaedic Centre

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* support, *(b)* advice, *(c)* legal costs, *(d)* financial guarantees, *(e)* management time and *(f)* cover for additional costs are to be provided by her Department for the transfer of the South West London Orthopaedic Centre in Epsom to the private sector. [17932]

Jane Kennedy: South West London Strategic Health Authority has requested the Department's support for the procurement of South West London Orthopaedic Centre and options are currently being reviewed.

Stroke

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding her Department provides for the Stroke Association. [17297]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The Department provides funding for the Stroke Association to conduct specific projects. They are currently receiving funding for a four year project, entitled, "Stroke Prevention among South Asians". They will receive a total of £50,500 in four annual payments.

Tarceva

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons Tarceva recently prescribed through an extended access programme is not available on the NHS; and when it will be available for patients on the NHS. [19703]

Jane Kennedy: The drug Tarceva (erlotinib) can be prescribed on the national health service.

Watermark Project

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department plans to rejoin the Watermark project. [21500]

Jane Kennedy: The Watermark project concluded in April 2003. The Department is not aware of any plans to initiate a similar project in the future.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

City Regions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition the Government uses of a city region. [20454]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There is no standard Government definition of what constitutes a city region. The concept of a city region is most commonly defined in terms of the travel to work hinterland of cities and towns, but it can also be described by patterns of travel to shopping centres or entertainment venues, or the geographical linkages between businesses and their suppliers.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions the Government have had with the National Assembly of Wales Government since 1 April on the council tax revaluation in Wales. [20459]

Mr. Woolas: The Government are routinely in touch with the Assembly Government about local government issues.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage change in the average Band D council tax has been since 1997–98; and if he will make a statement. [21491]

Mr. Woolas: Since 1997–98, the percentage change in the average Band D council tax has been 76.5 per cent.

The change is derived from headline taxes, before transitional reliefs and benefits and after capping. These figures are taken from BR1, BR2 and BR3 forms, as reported by the local authorities.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place a copy of the instructions and advice document prepared by the Valuation Office Agency for the English council tax revaluation in the Library. [17307]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency has issued a number of instructions and advice documents to those of its staff who were involved in preparation for the council tax revaluation. These will be placed in the Library of the House. The existing Council Tax Manual which is used currently by the Valuation Office Agency can be found on their website www.voa.gov.uk.

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the rates of employee absence in his Office have been in each year since 1997. [21022]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based. The most recent report for calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November and copies placed in the Libraries of the House. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are also available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and is putting in place the recommendations of recently published report "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Office. [21110]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Adult Basic Skills or 'Skills for Life' support is offered to new entrants and is also highlighted to managers, as part of the induction process.

"Skills for Life" has its own page on the intranet with links to:

Department for Education and Skills on-line literacy and numeracy tests;

The Training Framework, which has a section on writing skills;

The City Lit, who provide a range of Skills for Life courses;

The Plain English Campaign;

BBC SkillWise;

LearnDirect.

There is also information provided about dyslexia.

Development advice is provided to individuals on request, regarding literacy, numeracy and dyslexia. Learners are then referred to appropriate providers.

All staff have access to an on-site 'Learning Library'. This is well stocked and covers a wide range of material including Adult Basic Skills.

Departmental Working Groups

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 608–09W, on departmental working groups, how minutes from departmental working groups are *(a)* stored and *(b)* catalogued. [19777]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Official records, which include minutes of departmental working groups, are kept in registered files if they are in paper form or in electronic folders if they are created electronically. The files and folders are catalogued on a central database under themes and titles which describe the subject matter but will not necessarily contain the name of the working group itself. Registered files are kept internally or in an off-site store. Electronic records are all held internally.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 608–9W, on departmental working groups, (1) if he will list the standing departmental working groups; [19855]

(2) if he will list the departmental working groups that have been attended in the last 12 months by *(a)* the Deputy Prime Minister, *(b)* the Minister of Communities and Local Government, *(c)* departmental special advisers, *(d)* the Permanent Secretary and *(e)* junior departmental Ministers; [19668]

(3) if he will list the minutes from departmental working groups that have been sent to the offices of *(a)* the Deputy Prime Minister and *(b)* the Minister of Communities and Local Government since 1 January. [19669]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 608–09W. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Fire Service

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the regionalisation of the Fire Service. [21515]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government have no plans to regionalise the fire and rescue service. It has announced the locations of nine regional FiReControl centres designed to improve emergency response and strengthen resilience; and is encouraging and assisting Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together through Regional Management Boards to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Individual Fire and Rescue Authorities remain responsible for their local fire and rescue service and the content of its Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Local Area Agreements

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what *(a)* freedoms and *(b)* funding local authorities who sign Local Area Agreements will receive; [19922]

(2) what targets have been agreed for each Local Area Agreement that has been signed to date; [19887]

(3) whether local authorities may *(a)* break and *(b)* leave Local Area Agreements; and what the penalties are for doing so; [19876]

(4) how long the current round of Local Area Agreements will last. [19923]

Mr. Woolas: Local Area Agreements (LAA) are three year agreements. They give all areas the freedom to pool funding and spend it more flexibly to meet priorities for the individual local area. Further freedoms to help meet outcomes and targets in the LAA can be requested by each local area and those which have been granted and are under discussion are contained in each LAA. The level and type of funding varies across agreement, as each is based on different local priorities. The LAA guidance includes a summary of the funding streams which can be included in the agreements.

LAAs are entered into voluntarily by local authorities and their partners in the locality. Each local area develops appropriate performance management systems for the LAA and there are measures which can be applied should certain agreed targets not be met. Each LAA is based on local priorities and so each has a particular list of targets.

A copy of each LAA is available on the ODPM website:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=5899&l=3

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Byers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will extend the powers of the Local Government Ombudsman to include complaints made against the actions of a local authority monitoring officer. [21825]

Mr. Woolas: Section 26 of the Local Government Act 1974 provides that the Local Government Ombudsman may investigate complaints of injustice caused by maladministration in connection with action taken by or on behalf of a local authority. While it is for the Courts to interpret the statute, an allegation of maladministration in respect of an action by an officer of the authority such as the monitoring officer would already appear to fall within the Ombudsman's remit.

Millennium Dome

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firm bids there were for the millennium dome. [20802]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Under the first dome sale competition, which ran from March 1999 until February 2001, there were six firm final proposals, which culminated in preferred bidder status being given to two bidders in succession. When neither of those proposals could be brought to completion, the second sale process invited expressions of interest for both a future use for the dome and compatible uses for associated land on the Greenwich Peninsula. Three substantive proposals were received, although only two of these offered specific uses for the dome itself. Subsequently, the Meridian Delta Ltd. consortium with the Anschutz Entertainment Group was selected as best satisfying the assessment criteria, and negotiations were concluded with that consortium in May 2002. The commercial contracts went unconditional in June 2004 and work is now well under way on the new arena inside the dome.

Planning Applications

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the proportion of the cost incurred by local councils in processing planning applications which were covered by planning application fees in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [21283]

Yvette Cooper: In the last year for which an assessment was made, 2003, it was estimated that fees covered on average between 72 per cent. and 87 per cent. of the costs of handling planning applications depending on how overheads are measured. Since then fees for handling planning applications in England have been increased. These increases came into effect on 1 April 2005. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that these increases will generate an additional £68 million of extra resources for LPAs in England in 2005–06 which should lead broadly to full cost recovery.

Property Services Agency

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which Government department *(a)* has responsibility for the residuary functions of the Property Services Agency (PSA) and *(b)* maintains the registry of former employees of the PSA. [19849]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The former Property Services Agency (PSA) was responsible for the provision of property management services, building construction and maintenance and appropriate related supplies to Government departments. The Office for the Deputy Prime Minster has responsibilities for residual matters relating to the former PSA in respect of (1) the parts of civil estate for which the former Department of the Environment was responsible and (2) any outstanding financial liabilities of the PSA. In practice these responsibilities mostly relate to residuary liabilities for former PSA employees. ODPM does not maintain a registry of former employees of the PSA.

Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on rebranding in his Department and related agencies since 2003–04. [18406]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent £52,117 on developing and introducing the revised corporate identity for the Department since 2003. This work included all design and promotional work including the guidelines advice.

The information on rebranding for related agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Window Cleaning Service

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon representing the House of Commons Commission what the cost has been of providing a window cleaning service for the parliamentary estate each year since 1997, broken down by cost for each building cleaned. [21897]

Nick Harvey: Until 2003 the cost of window cleaning was not separately identified. Since August 2003 when the present contract was let, the annual costs of window cleaning in buildings on the parliamentary estate have been as follows. The overall cost of window cleaning on the parliamentary estate is set out in the contract; the apportionment between individual buildings is a matter for the contractor. The figures shown represent the cost to the House of Commons.

£

Building	*Charge to House of Commons*
Palace of Westminster	58,000
Norman Shaw North	7,000
Norman Shaw South	3,000
1 Canon Row	3,000
1 Derby Gate	3,000
1 Parliament Street	4,000
7 Old Palace Yard	1,000
1 The Abbey Garden	1,000
2 The Abbey Garden	1,000
Millbank House	1,000
7 Millbank	9,000
22 John Islip Street	1,000
Portcullis House	63,000
Fielden House	9,000
Total	164,000

WORK AND PENSIONS

Age-related Payments

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to what extent the payment of the age-related payment will take account of the level of council tax benefit which an individual is receiving. [20718]

Mr. Plaskitt: People in receipt of the guarantee credit element of pension credit, who are entitled to the maximum help available through council tax benefit, are not entitled to the £200 payment. Those not in receipt of the guarantee credit element of pension credit are eligible for the £200 age-related payment.

Benefits

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were in receipt of *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance, *(c)* income support and *(d)* income support for lone parents in Pudsey in each year since 1997. [18921]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is the tables.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in Pudsey parliamentary constituency

As at February each year	*All IB/SDA*	*IB*	*SDA*
1997	3,000	2,400	[1]500
1998	2,700	2,200	[1]500
1999	2,600	2,100	[1]500
2000	2,800	2,300	[1]500
2001	2,800	2,400	[1]400
2002	2,700	2,300	[1]400
2003	2,700	2,300	[1]300
2004	2,600	2,300	[1]300
2005	2,600	2,300	[1]300

Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) claimants in Pudsey parliamentary constituency

As at February each year	*JSA(C)*	*JSA(IB)*
1997	[1]400	700
1998	[1]200	700
1999	[1]400	600
2000	[1]100	[1]500
2001	[1]200	[1]500
2002	[1]200	[1]400
2003	[1]300	[1]300
2004	[1]200	[1]300
2005	[1]100	[1]600

Income support (IS) claimants in Pudsey parliamentary constituency

As at February each year	*All IS*	*IS lone parents*
1997	4,600	1,000
1998	4,500	1,000
1999	4,300	1,000
2000	4,300	900
2001	4,300	900
2002	4,100	700
2003	4,100	600
2004	1,800	700
2005	1,800	600

[1] Figures are based on very few sample cases and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. From November 2003 IS figures are severely affected by the introduction of pension credit, which replaced MIG on the 6 October 2003 and extended IS entitlement to customers aged 60+. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table. It is not possible to produce comparisons across 6 October 2003 on a consistent basis, whether pension credit cases are included or not.
4. 'Lone parents' are defined as single parents aged under 60 and not in receipt of a disability premium.
5. 'Others' are defined as everyone who isn't a lone parent.
6. There is a small overlap between jobseeker's allowance (income-based) (JSA(IB)) and jobseeker's allowance (contribution-based) (JSA(C)) caseloads—claimants in receipt of income-based JSA who would also be entitled to the contributory element are counted in both categories.
7. Incapacity Benefit figures include credits only cases.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Easington constituency are in receipt of *(a)* state retirement pension, *(b)* job seeker's allowance and *(c)* incapacity benefit. [20351]

Mr. Timms: In Easington parliamentary constituency, there were 15,400 people in receipt of state pension, as at September 2004; 1,143 people in receipt of jobseeker's allowance, as at September 2005; and 9,500 people in receipt of incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance, as at February 2005. In each case, these are the most recent available figures.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much it cost to run the Benefits Fraud Hotline in each of the last three years; and how many calls it received in each year. [18620]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the following tables.

National Benefit Fraud Hotline operating costs

	£
April to March	
2002–03	959,277
2003–04	957,977
2004–05	1,192,843

Calls answered by National Benefit Fraud Hotline

	Number
April to March	
2002–03	159,290
2003–04	211,054
2004–05	199,004

Source:
National Benefit Fraud Hotline

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* budget and *(b)* staffing levels of the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate were for the (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05 financial years. [18694]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the tables.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate budget

	£ million
2002–03[1]	7.11
2003–04	7.71
2004–05	7.86

[1] This included recruitment for comprehensive performance assessment work and performance improvement action team (funded by Treasury Invest to Save money).

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate staffing levels

	Staff in post
2002–03	139
2003–04	154
2004–05	147

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans the Government have to *(a)* tackle benefit fraud and *(b)* simplify the benefits system. [17840]

Mr. Plaskitt: Our plans for tackling benefit fraud were published in 'Reducing Fraud in the Benefit System: Achievements and Ambitions' on 13 October which is available in the Library.

We are exploring and developing ways to simplify benefits while continuing to protect social security expenditure. We want to ensure that they provide the best support for helping people into work while protecting the position of those in greatest need. We want to improve the financial incentives to work for some groups, to strengthen the incentives to seek work, and to save for retirement for all groups. We are also looking at the interaction between the benefits system and other forms of support.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimates are of take-up rates of each benefit and pension payment administered by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [20007]

Mr. Plaskitt: Estimates of take-up of the main income-related benefits administered by the DWP—income support, minimum income guarantee and income-based jobseeker's allowance—as well as local authority administered housing benefit and council tax benefit, can be found in the DWP publication series entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". Copies of the reports are held in the Library; in due course the series will cover take-up of pension credit.

Estimates from the Department's "Pensioners' Incomes Series", copies of which can be found in the Library, show 98 per cent. of all pensioner families (single pensioners and pensioner couples) have some income from the state pension.

Currently it is not possible to estimate take-up rates for disability living allowance and attendance allowance. Following a recommendation in 'Meeting DWP's long-term information needs on disability: a feasibility report', (DWP Research report number 267), the Department is commissioning research to test two possible approaches to establish whether it is possible to estimate take-up rates for these benefits. Results will be available in 2007.

Information on the take-up rates of other DWP administered benefits are not available.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Government continue to provide benefits to meet the interest payments on a loan which had been taken out by a person now on benefits when an endowment policy accompanying a mortgage matures but does not provide sufficient funds to pay off the balance of that mortgage. [21827]

Mr. Plaskitt: Yes; the balance of any loan which originally qualified for help with interest payments would remain eligible for such help where part of the capital is repaid.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of housing benefit paid to council tenants was in the last year for which figures are available. [19805]

Mr. Plaskitt: In 2004–05, the total cost of housing benefit rent rebate paid to local authority tenants in Great Britain was £5,184 million.

Notes:

1. Figure has been rounded to the nearest million.

2. Figure includes non-HRA rent rebate expenditure, which is expenditure outside the housing revenue account covering tenants who are temporarily homeless and placed into local authority housing.

3. Figure subject to slight change following receipt of 2004–05 final audited subsidy claims data.

4. Figure will vary from the published Budget 2005 expenditure forecast for 2004–05 but will be consistent with that provided at PBR 2005.

Source:

2004–05 Initial Final subsidy claims data, October 2005

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of households which did not take-up entitlement to council tax benefit, broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* local authority area, (i) in total and (ii) as a percentage of the number of eligible households, listed in descending order of percentage take-up. [20944]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available below national level. The latest available information is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2002/2003", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Child Support Scheme

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many non-resident parents on the new child support scheme have registered as full-time students in each month since March 2003. [19405]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Disability Living Allowance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions under what circumstances Ministers can intervene in individual cases relating to the award of disability living allowance. [16974]

Mrs. McGuire: Decisions on claims to disability living allowance and other social security benefits are made in accordance with the relevant legislation and case law by decision makers delegated to do so on behalf of the Secretary of State. There are no circumstances in which the Secretary of State or his Ministers can intervene personally to influence the award of benefit, disallowance of a claim or the removal of benefit from someone receiving it.

The Secretary of State, however, through the authority delegated to officials, can conduct random checks on individual cases to ensure that benefit remains properly payable. He can also institute a reconsideration of entitlement in individual cases if he has reason to believe there may be doubt about entitlement to benefit. In either of these circumstances the Secretary of State can demand information from a benefit recipient to help determine whether they are or remain entitled to benefit.

Household Statistics

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of children living in households with no adult in work are *(a)* in single parent households, *(b)* in a household with at least one parent claiming incapacity benefit and *(c)* in a household with at least one adult on jobseeker's allowance; and if he will make a statement. [20670]

Mr. Plaskitt: In spring 2005 the proportion of children living in households in Great Britain where No one is working was 15.7 per cent. Of this, 67 per cent. live in lone parent households.

Source:

Household Labour Force Survey, Spring 2005.

In February 2005 there were an estimated 969,000 children and young adult dependents in families claiming sick and disabled benefits (this is a slightly broader definition than incapacity benefits, and may include some people in work), representing 36 per cent. of the total number of children in families claiming a key working age benefit.

Source:

DWP Client group analysis for Great Britain, February 2005.

215,000 children and young adult dependents in February 2005 were in families claiming jobseeker's allowance, representing 8 per cent. of the total number of children in families claiming a key working age benefit.

Source:

DWP Client group analysis for Great Britain, February 2005.

Income Support

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the conditions for receipt of income support by lone parents. [19955]

Mr. Plaskitt: A lone parent can receive income support if they have a child under the age of 16 for whom they are responsible and who is a member of their household. A person is considered as responsible for a child if they are in receipt of child benefit for that child. If no one has claimed child benefit, the child will be treated as the responsibility of the person with whom they normally live.

The lone parent must not be in remunerative work, which is defined as work of 16 hours per week or more. Their income from all sources, after any appropriate disregard, must be below the applicable amount, which is defined as the amount of benefit appropriate to their circumstances. In addition, the lone parent's capital must be below the upper limit, which is currently £8,000—increasing to £16,000 from April 2006—for most people under the age of 60.

IT Services

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the recent restructuring of outsourced contracts for IT services for his Department. [16524]

Mr. Timms: The realignment of contracts between DWP and EDS was announced on 24 August 2005. The new arrangements will provide the Department with significantly better IT services at a lower price.

On average, over the next five years, the Department will be spending around £520 million a year on services delivered by EDS, compared to more than £700 million a year spent since the DWP was created. This is while the Department, in line with the Gershon recommendations, is modernising and becoming more IT focused.

The savings are a result of a contract realignment which simplifies the complex structure of separate contracts inherited by the DWP when it was created out of the former Department of Social Security and Department for Education and Employment. The realigned contract brings together and standardises the different historical arrangements and ensures highly competitive, benchmarked prices for the services EDS delivers.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the benefit entitlement of migrant workers. [20024]

Mr. Plaskitt: To be entitled to income-related benefits, including income-based jobseeker's allowance, income support, state pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit, a claimant must be habitually resident, and have a right to reside, in the Common Travel Area. The Common Travel Area includes the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and the Republic of Ireland.

Workers from the European economic area (EEA) other than nationals of the eight accession-countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) (A8), have immediate access to income-related benefits. This is because they have a right to reside under EC law and are treated as habitually resident.

A8 workers who are registered under the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme have a right to reside and are entitled to in-work benefits such as housing benefit and council tax benefit. If they are in part-time work, working 15 hours or less a week, they can also qualify for income-based jobseeker's allowance. If they lose their job they lose their worker status, but will be able to remain in the UK to look for work. However, they will not have access to the benefit system. After 12 months of uninterrupted registered work they can have access to the full range of benefits.

All other foreign nationals who come here to take up work are subject to immigration control and are excluded from income-related benefits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many migrant workers are claiming *(a)* income support, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance, *(c)* incapacity benefit and *(d)* disability living allowance; and if he will make a statement. [20025]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

Basic Bank Accounts

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of basic bank accounts opened for the purposes of receiving state pension and benefit payments with *(a)* Abbey, *(b)* Barclays, *(c)* HSBC, *(d)* Halifax/Bank of Scotland, *(e)* Royal Bank of Scotland/Nat West, *(f)* Lloyds TSB and *(g)* Nationwide Building Society; and if he will make a statement. [19592]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available in the format requested. With the exception of the Post Office card account, the information we collect within the Department does not differentiate between the different types of account offered by the different financial institutions.

Latest figures from the British Bankers' Association show that the number of basic bank accounts has continued to grow with more than 5.8 million accounts of this type now in operation. All the major banks now offer a basic bank account and more than 2 million of these accounts can be accessed at Post Office branches.

Since April 2003, when direct payment became the Departments normal way of paying benefits and pensions, a net total of around 1.4 million basic bank accounts have been opened.

The Department is now paying around 97 per cent. of customers by direct payment into an account.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of indexing the pensions of British citizens retiring to each country without a reciprocal agreement on social security, from this point forward, but without restoring the pensions to the level they would be at had they always been indexed *(a)* for each of the next five years, *(b)* in 2015, *(c)* in 2020 and *(d)* in 2030; [19953]

(2) how many overseas citizens who have settled in the United Kingdom since 1975 are now receiving *(a)* UK pensions and *(b)* UK means-tested pension benefits; and if he will make a statement; [19956]

(3) how many citizens of the United Kingdom who are resident outside the United Kingdom are receiving a basic state pension which is not uprated each year, broken down by country of residence. [20026]

Mr. Timms: Such information as is available is in the tables.

The information in table 1 shows the estimated costs of uprating the current amount of state pension paid to people residing in countries where it is not uprated.

Reliable long-term estimates are not available. However, the costs would increase significantly over future years.

Table 1

	Additional cost of uprating (£)
2005–06	20,000,000
2006–07	50,000,000
2007–08	70,000,000

Table 1

	Additional cost of uprating (£)
2008–09	100,000,000
2009–10	130,000,000

Source:
Forecast expenditure figures based upon DWP Retirement Pension administrative data, HM Treasury short-term Retail Prices Index forecasts and GAD Overseas Pensioner forecasts.

The Department does not collect details of individuals' citizenship as UK state benefits are paid to all who satisfy the conditions of entitlement regardless of citizenship. Therefore, information on benefit entitlement split by citizenship status is not available. The information in table 2 shows the numbers of UK state pensions paid to people residing in countries outside the European Economic Area and with which the UK does not have a reciprocal Social Security agreement covering uprating of UK state pensions.

Table 2

Country	*Number of UK state pensions paid*
Afghanistan	1
Albania	9
Algeria	7
Andorra	201
Anguilla	142
Antigua	426
Antilles (Netherlands)	31
Arab Emirates (United)	256
Argentina	238
Ascension Island	5
Australia	236,851
Bahamas	235
Bahrain	64
Bangladesh	2,682
Barbuda	4
Belize	53
Benin	4
Bhutan	1
Bolivia	25
Botswana	131
Brazil	498
Brunei	14
Bulgaria	59
Burkina Faso	2
Burma	3
Cameroon	12
Canada	151,230
Cape Verde Islands	6
Cayman Islands	104
Central African Republic	2
Chad	173
Chile	1
China Peoples Republic	112
Colombia	84
Congo	2
Cook Islands	7
Costa Rica	48
Cote D'Ivoire	2
Cuba	6
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2
Djibouti	100
Dominica Commonwealth	1,099
Dominican Republic	35
Ecuador	44
Egypt	156
El Salvador	9
Ethiopia	27
Falkland Islands and Dependencies	38
Faroe Islands	8
Fiji	75
Gambia	76
Ghana	778
Greenland	1
Grenada	1,514
Guatemala	9
Guinea	2

Table 2

Country	*Number of UK state pensions paid*
Guyana	438
Haiti	1
Honduras	8
Hong Kong	1,097
India	4,139
Indonesia	86
Iran	15
Iraq	7
Japan	324
Jordan	47
Kampuchea	6
Kenya	593
Kiribati	3
Kuwait	40
Lebanon	59
Lesotho	7
Liberia	2
Libya	2
Macau	10
Malagasy Republic	6
Malawi	86
Malaysia	446
Maldive Islands	2
Mexico	301
Monaco	293
Mongolia	2
Montserrat	143
Morocco	86
Mozambique	3
Namibia	41
Nepal	25
Nevis St. Kitts-Nevis	503
New Caledonia	4
New Zealand	44,965
Nicaragua	7
Niger	1
Nigeria	2,410
Norfolk Island	8
Oman	51
Pakistan	4,969
Panama	21
Papua New Guinea	16
Paraguay	21
Peru	90
Qatar	27
Republic of Armenia	2
Republic of Azerbaijan	2
Republic of Belarus	20
Republic of Kazakhstan	1
Republic of Kyrgyzstan	1
Republic of Moldova	3
Republic of Tajikistan	1
Republic of Turkmenistan	2
Republic of Uzbekistan	2
Republic of Yemen	2,779
Rumania	22
Rwanda	1
San Marino	1
Sarawak	2
Saudi Arabia	140
Senegal	7
Seychelles	90
Sharjah	1
Sierra Leone	96
Singapore	279
Solomon Islands	8
Somalia	48
South Africa	36,558
South Korea	14
Sri Lanka	586
St. Helena and Dependencies	71
St. Lucia	1,370
St. Martins	1
St. Vincents and Grenadines	812
Sudan	4
Surinam	3
Swaziland	94
Syria	24
Tahiti	2
Taiwan	17
Tanzania	56

Table 2

Country	*Number of UK state pensions paid*
Thailand	1,019
The Russian Federation	87
Togo	7
Tonga	10
Trinidad and Tobago	1,257
Tunisia	23
Turks and Caicos Islands	19
Uganda	65
Ukraine	228
Uruguay	33
Vanuatu	21
Venezuela	79
Vietnam	9
Virgin Islands (British)	47
Western Samoa	7
Zambia	178
Zimbabwe	2,809

Source:
DWP caseload data—October 2005

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in the Coventry, South area who have lost their pensions due to firm insolvency since 1997. [21269]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available. The Government are currently inviting notifications of affected pension schemes to the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), and are therefore obtaining some information on the number of members facing pensions losses due to company insolvency. In due course, information will also be collected on individual members in schemes qualifying for FAS, including their addresses, at which point it may be possible to make some estimates of numbers affected in particular areas.

Voice Stress Analysis

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what budget has been allocated for testing the use of voice stress analysis in telephone based benefit claims; which section of his Department is managing this work; and if he will make a statement. [20153]

Mr. Plaskitt: At the present time no specific budget has been allocated for testing the use of voice stress analysis in telephone based claims. Work to assess the feasibility of such tests is being managed by a team of staff drawn from a number of sections within the Department who have experience of using technology for the administration of benefit claims.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans he has to introduce lie-detector tests for benefit claimants for telephone claims; and if he will make a statement; [18637]

(2) when he plans to introduce voice stress analysis for processing telephone claims for benefits; and if he will make a statement. [20251]

Mr. Plaskitt: Voice stress analysis is one technique we are considering to help improve customer service and eliminate fraud and error in telephone claims for benefits. We will assess the usefulness of this technology. Once piloting and other work is completed we will consider what application the technology has for the administration of benefit claims. We will not be piloting voice stress analysis on telephone claims to disability living allowance.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Members' Salaries

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Leader of the House how many hon. Members are not eligible for any additional salary above the basic Member's salary granted for a ministerial or other position in the House. [21079]

Mr. Hoon: From 1 November, when the members of the chairmen's panel become eligible for additional payments, a total of 153 Members will receive an addition to the basic Member's salary. 488 Members will therefore receive the basic salary only. (This excludes the five Sinn Fein Members who do not receive a salary.)

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Council

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries with a British Council presence; and in which countries such a presence has been *(a)* created and *(b)* withdrawn since 1997. [20549]

Mr. Straw: The countries and territories with a British Council presence are:

Afghanistan
Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Armenia
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Belgium
Bulgaria
Burma
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Egypt
Eritrea
Estonia
Ethiopia
Finland
France

Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Korea
Kosovo
Kuwait
Latvia
Lebanon
Libya
Lithuania
Macedonia
Malawi
Malaysia
Malta
Mauritius
Mexico
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Palestinian Territories[1]
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia and Montenegro[2]
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
USA
Uzbekistan
Venezuela
Vietnam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

[1] Previously East Jerusalem and Gaza.

[2] The British Council office in Belgrade previously covered the whole of the former Yugoslavia.

Countries or territories in which the British Council has established a presence since 1997:

Afghanistan
Armenia
Iraq
Iran
Libya

The British Council also has a presence in Kosovo, which is not a country or territory but is in UN Administration.

Countries or territories from which the British Council has withdrawn its presence since 1997:

Belarus
Brunei
Ecuador
Lesotho
Swaziland
Kyrgyzstan

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals the Government are putting forward to EU *(a)* partners and EU *(b)* institutions for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy; and if he will make a statement. [21190]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Presidency has not put forward any detailed proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). What we have asked for is a proper debate on the future of the EU budget, including the CAP, and we have seen public contributions from politicians, political commentators, economists and fanners across Europe. As Presidency, we have also held formal consultations with each of the member states, as well as Romania and Bulgaria, in order to ensure that we understand their views and concerns on the EU budget for 2007–13, including the fundamental review of Community spending that we

have proposed. The purpose of such a review would be to ensure that EU expenditure is focused on areas where the EU can add the most value in comparison with spending at the national or regional level, taking into account the global economic and political challenges faced by the EU. The UK Presidency believes agreement on the 2007–13 budget can and should be reached in December, and we will have to reflect, in the light of member states' views and the proposals published by the European Commission on 20 October, how best to do this. We have also made good progress towards an agreement to reform the CAP sugar regime. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will update Parliament on these negotiations in due course.

China

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether the Chinese Government has cancelled the passport of students from Tibet granted Chevening scholarships by his Department; [20325]

(2) pursuant to the Answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 732W, on Tibetan Students (China), whether the British Ambassador in Bejing has reported any Chevening scholars having their passport withdrawn by the Chinese Government; and if he will make a statement. [20463]

Ian Pearson: The British Embassy in China has approved two Chevening scholarships for Tibetan students in the last three years. Unfortunately, one of these students was unable to take up a place at a UK university due to various reasons, only one of which was related to the applicant not having a passport. Issuing passports to Chinese nationals remains a matter for the Chinese Government.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the Director of Human Resources is of his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [20266]

Mr. Straw: The Human Resources Director of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is Mr. David Warren. He has no specialist qualifications. There are a number of professionally qualified staff in the Directorate, and we employ outside experts with appropriate professional qualifications where necessary.

He is a career diplomat who joined the FCO in 1975 and has served in a number of positions in London, including Personnel Policy Department where he was also an interviewer for the Civil Service Selection Board, and overseas in Tokyo (twice) and Nairobi. From 2000–04 he was a Director and member of the Senior Management Team of UK Trade and Investment, the joint FCO/Department of Trade and Industry organisation.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21023]

Mr. Straw: Recorded sickness absence for staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) was as follows:

	Total number of sickness days	*Rate (days/officer)*
2000	[1]20,900	3.8
2001	25,012	4.6
2002	27,720	4.9
2003	33,219	5.6
2004	35,969	6.0

[1] Estimate, based on available data.

Figures for years before 2000 are not available. Data collection over this period has been complicated by the introduction of new pay and management information systems. It is therefore possible that the figures given do not reflect consistent recording methods. The FCO is currently working to improve both accuracy and detail in this area.

Per capita sickness absence in the FCO has been consistently below the public sector average. In 2003 it was recorded at 5.6 days per person. The data showed a slight rise in 2004 to six days per person. This is likely to be the result of better management control/reporting and the introduction of new IT systems.

The FCO is fully committed to implementing the recommendations in the report on "Managing Sickness in the Public Sector". A new FCO health care contract which started in April 2005 includes a comprehensive occupational health service aimed at better and more proactive management of long and short-term sickness absence.

Diplomatic Missions (Traffic Violations)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* parking and *(b)* other minor traffic violation fines incurred by diplomatic missions in (i) London and (ii) the UK in each of the last four years are outstanding. [20667]

Mr. Straw: I shall issue a Written Statement, within this Parliamentary session, listing the number of outstanding parking and other minor traffic violation fines incurred by diplomatic missions based in the UK for 2004. In practice, because diplomatic missions are based mainly in London, these figures are provided by London borough councils. Details for the previous three years can be found in the *Official Report* as follows:

(2001)—12 July 2002, *Official Report*, columns 1256–57W

(2002)—11 September 2003, *Official Report*, columns 31–33WS

(2003)—9 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 136–138WS

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in respect of which countries' diplomatic missions he has had *(a)* discussions, *(b)* meetings and *(c)* correspondence regarding a refusal to pay the congestion charge citing (i) Article 34 and (ii) Article 49 of the Vienna Convention. [20668]

Mr. Straw: Prior to the introduction of the Congestion Charge, I had representations from the Danish and Spanish Embassies and corresponded with the Deans of the Americas, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Pacific Groups. Following the

introduction of the Congestion Charge in February 2003, I have had representations from the African Union Group, who also met with my officials, as well as correspondence with the Bulgarian, Swiss, German, Moroccan and US Embassies.

Director for the Americas

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to appoint a Director for the Americas. [21131]

Mr. Straw: An appointment is expected to be made shortly, following usual internal procedures.

Embassies/High Commissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list embassies which his Department has *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in each year from 1997. [20547]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has opened 10 and closed nine embassies and high commissions since 1997. The following table provides further details of these posts and the year in which they were either opened or closed. Like any well-run organisation, the FCO continues to move its resources flexibly, in line with UK interests.

Embassies and high commissions opened and closed since 1997

	Mission opened	*Mission closed*
2000–01	Tripoli	—
2001–02	Asmara, Bamako, Dushanbe, Kabul and Pyongyang	—
2002–03	Chisinau, Conakry and Dili	—
2003–04	—	Bamako, Managua, San Salvador and Tegucigalpa
2004–05	Baghdad	—
2005–06	—	Antananarivo, Asuncion, Maseru, Mbabane and Nassau

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* embassies and *(b)* high commissions have been (i) closed, (ii) contracted in respect of personnel and (iii) expanded in each of the last five years for which records are available. [18875]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Like any well-run organisation the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) deploys its resources flexibly as priorities require in line with UK interests. The following embassies and high commissions have been closed in the last five years.

2000–01

None

2001–02

None

2002–03

None

2003–04

Bamako, Managua, San Salvador and Tegucigalpa

2004–05

None

2005–06

Antananarivo, Asuncion, Maseru, Mbabane and Nassau

The size of UK missions overseas is determined by a range of factors including changes in demand for consular and visa services; reductions due to efficiency measures; and reprioritisations in line with changed UK priorities. Data are not held centrally for non-FCO staff, eg Ministry of Defence or the Department for International Development, in British missions overseas. The following embassies and High commissions are therefore those that have expanded or contracted FCO staff numbers in the last two years. Comparable data are not held centrally for earlier years.

Name	*2004*	*2005*
Abidjan	—	Contract
Abu Dhabi	Contract	Expand
Abuja	Expand	Expand
Accra	Expand	Expand
Addis Ababa	Expand	Expand
Algiers	Expand	Contract
Almaty	Expand	—
Amman	Expand	Expand
Ankara	Expand	Expand
Antananarivo •	—	Contract
Ashgabat	—	Contract
Asmara	Contract	—
Athens	Expand	Contract
Baghdad	Expand	Expand
Bahrain	Expand	—
Baku	Expand	—
Bandar Seri Begawan	Expand	Contract
Bangkok	Expand	Expand
Beijing	Expand	Expand
Beirut	Expand	Expand
Belgrade	Expand	Expand
Belmopan	—	Contract
Berlin	Expand	Expand
Berne	Expand	Contract
Bogota	Expand	Expand
Brasilia	Expand	Contract
Bratislava	Contract	Expand
Bridgetown	Expand	Expand
Brussels	Expand	Contract
Bucharest	Expand	Contract
Budapest	Expand	Contract
Buenos Aires	Expand	—
Cairo	Expand	—
Canberra	Expand	Contract
Caracas	Expand	—
Chisinau	Expand	—
Canberra	Expand	Contract
Colombo	Expand	Contract
Copenhagen	Expand	—
Dakar	Expand	—
Damascus	Expand	Expand
Dar es Salaam	Expand	Contract
Dhaka	Expand	Contract
Doha	Expand	Expand
Dublin	Expand	Contract
Dushanbe	Expand	Expand
Freetown	Expand	Expand
Georgetown	Expand	—
Guatemala	Expand	—
Hague	Expand	—
Hanoi	Expand	Contract
Harare	Contract	Expand
Helsinki	Expand	Contract
Islamabad	Expand	Expand
Jakarta	Expand	Contract
Kabul	Expand	Expand
Kampala	Expand	—
Kathmandu	Expand	Contract
Khartoum	Expand	Expand
Kiev	Expand	—
Kigali	Expand	Expand
Kingston	Expand	Contract
Kinshasa	Expand	Expand
Kuala Lumpur	Expand	Expand
Kuwait City	Expand	—
La Paz	—	Contract
Lilongwe	Expand	Contract

Name	2004	2005
Lima	Contract	Contract
Ljubljana	Expand	—
Luanda	Expand	Contract
Lusaka	Expand	Contract
Madrid	Expand	Expand
Manila	Expand	Expand
Maputo	—	Contract
Maseru	Expand	—
Mbabane	Contract	—
Mexico City	Expand	Expand
Moscow	Expand	—
Muscat	Expand	—
Nairobi	Expand	Expand
New Delhi	Expand	Contract
Nicosia	Contract	Expand
Ottawa	Expand	Contract
Paris	Expand	Expand
Phnom Penh	Expand	Contract
Port Louis	—	Contract
Prague	Expand	Contract
Pretoria	Expand	Expand
Pyong Yang	Expand	—
Rabat	—	Expand
Rangoon	Expand	Expand
Riga	Expand	—
Riyadh	Expand	—
Rome	Expand	Contract
Sana'a	Expand	Expand
Santiago	—	Contract
Sarajevo	Expand	—
Seoul	Expand	—
Singapore	Expand	Contract
Skopje	Expand	Expand
Sofia	Expand	Contract
Stockholm	Expand	Contract
Tallinn	Expand	—
Tashkent	Expand	Contract
Tbilisi	Expand	—
Tehran	Expand	—
Tel Aviv	Expand	Expand
Tirana	Expand	—
Tokyo	Expand	Contract
Tripoli	Expand	Expand
Tunis	Expand	Contract
Valletta	Expand	Contract
Vatican	Contract	—
Victoria	—	Contract
Vilnius	Expand	—
Warsaw	Expand	—
Washington	Expand	Expand
Wellington	Expand	—
Yaounde	Expand	Expand
Yerevan	—	Contract
Zagreb	Expand	—

EU Council

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken under the UK Presidency of the European Union to make Council meetings more efficient. [21593]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Presidency tabled two discussions by Deputy Permanent Representatives to the EU on this issue in early July. Among other things, it was agreed to hold fewer, more focused debates and to limit the length of interventions by Council members. We think this has made Council meetings more efficient. These discussions were based on the guidelines set out in Annex IV of the Council Rules of Procedure, which were agreed by all member states in 2003 in preparation for the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 25 member states. The Rules of Procedures seek to focus Council meetings on the key decisions to be taken by Ministers.

EU Finance

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* Ministers from EU member states and *(b)* European Commissioners (i) he and (ii) Ministers in his Department have met during the course of the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Union to discuss the European Union's next financial perspective and the future of the UK's abatement; what discussions (A) he and (B) Ministers in his Department have held with each; and if he will make a statement. [21193]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have discussed the financial perspectives at ministerial and/or official level with each and every EU member state, the two accession states, Bulgaria and Romania, the European Commission and the European Parliament. We have made clear in all of these contacts that, as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister wrote to his fellow EU Heads of Government on 20 October, we believe that agreement can and should be reached at the December Council. Our position on the abatement remains as set out by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister before the House on 20 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 523–25.

European Commission

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is towards the establishment of an external action service by the EU Commission. [15840]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government welcomed the proposals to create a European External Action Service (EEAS) designed to support the proposed new EU Foreign Minister role, as part of the Constitutional treaty. The Constitutional treaty proposed that the Service would be established by the Council, which is made up of member states, on the basis of a proposal by the EU Foreign Minister, and not by the Commission, although the Commission would have to give their consent to the proposals. As the hon. Member is aware, the future of the Constitutional treaty, and hence the possibility of an EU Foreign Minister, is uncertain following the June European Council. We do not believe that an EEAS, as envisaged in the treaty, can be introduced without treaty change.

European Security

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives the UK Presidency has introduced to increase the personal security of citizens in Europe. [21592]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Implementation of the EU's Counter-Terrorism Action Plan is a priority for the UK Presidency. The terrorist attacks in London on 7 July underlined the importance of this work. At the extraordinary Justice and Home Affairs Council called by the UK Presidency on 13 July, member states renewed their commitment to fighting terrorism and agreed to bring forward deadlines in the Action Plan.

As a result of this renewed momentum, and building on the work of previous Presidencies, we are on course to make good progress in providing greater protection

for EU citizens. To support the Action Plan, the UK Presidency also aims to review the EU's long-term counter-terrorism strategy before the end of the year.

Indonesia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the attack on Christians in Jatinulya, East Bekari, West Java; and what representations he has made to the Government in Indonesia regarding anti-religious violence there. [21943]

Dr. Howells: We regularly raise treatment of religious minorities with the Indonesian Government, as part of our dialogue with them on human rights. We have urged them to encourage religious freedom, maintain law and order and promote reconciliation.

In September this year, President Yudhoyono stressed that the state guaranteed every citizen religious freedom and called on the police and members of the public to act to prevent violence against any faith. The President also asked his Minister of Religious Affairs to work with local governments to find a solution to the recent closures of churches, including those in West Java.

Malaysia

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor), of 20 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 743W, on Malaysia, if he will make a statement on progress with the Government's review of their policy on the acceptance and wearing of foreign military medals by British citizens. [21399]

Mr. Straw: The Cabinet Office Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals, which is responsible for advising the Government on policy matters relating to the Honours System, will be considering a Foreign and Commonwealth Office paper on the accepting and wearing of non-British awards by British citizens at a meeting due to take place on 7 December.

Ricin

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what dates his Department informed the United States that *(a)* a substance believed to be ricin was discovered in an incident in the UK in 2003 and *(b)* that the substance was not ricin. [21889]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not inform the United States that a substance believed to be ricin was discovered in an incident in the UK in 2003, or that the substance subsequently was found not to be ricin.

Zimbabwe

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the report prepared by officials from his Department following their visit to Zimbabwe in the summer. [19792]

Dr. Howells: Due to the political climate in Zimbabwe, the meetings with some of the sources were conducted on the basis that their identities would not be revealed except in relation to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) proceedings. The AIT decided to make an order under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 by which those sources which had requested anonymity were protected, and accordingly the team's summary of their evidence was not made public. However, the team's evidence is noted in detail in the determination of the AIT, which can be viewed on the AIT website at http://www.ait.gov.uk/determinations.do

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 27 October 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

GM Crops

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the European Commission on GM crops; and if she will make a statement. [20511]

Mr. Morley: Defra Ministers have not had any recent discussions with the European Commission on GM crop issues, except in the context of the general discussions held with all EU Environment Ministers at EU Council meetings.

Kyoto Protocols

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the prospects for the Kyoto protocols being adhered to in the long term. [21702]

Mr. Morley: The UK Government and the EU remain committed to the framework set out by the Kyoto protocol. It remains crucially important, as the first ever legally binding framework, to set quantified emissions reductions for developed countries. The UK Government and the EU want to build on the Kyoto protocol and its key elements such as targets and timetables, monitoring and reporting, compliance and the flexibility mechanisms for the period after 2012.

In addition, on the basis of the European Commission's communication "Winning the battle against global climate change" (February 2005) the European Council of Ministers concluded that the EU's future climate change strategy should:

(a) Strive at the widest possible cooperation by all countries;

(b) Include all important greenhouse gases, sectors and mitigation options;

(c) Drive technological innovation, employing an optimal mix of "push" and "pull" policies, in particular in the transport and energy sector;

(d) Promote the transfer of technologies to appropriate markets;

(e) Provide for the continued use of market-based and flexible instruments, and;

(f) Support the adaptation to unavoidable climate change in all countries, particularly in the most vulnerable developing countries.

However, the UNFCCC remains the place to agree on future frameworks.

Water Management

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what long-term planning to take account of *(a)* climate change and *(b)* development of new water resources is (i) in place and (ii) planned in order to tackle the risk of water shortages. [23170]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. As part of the agency's management role it has national and regional water resource strategies which set out the pressures over the next 25 years.

Water companies have duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. They have 25 year water resource plans which complement the agency strategies and seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. The Environment Agency issues guidance to water companies on how the implications of climate change should be factored in to their water resource plans. The plans are assessed by the Environment Agency and reviewed annually. They are produced voluntarily at present but will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003.

Each water company also has a drought plan which sets out how the company will continue to meet its duties to supply adequate quantities of wholesome water during drought periods with as little recourse as possible to drought orders and permits. These too are produced voluntarily at present but regulations are now in place making their production a statutory requirement as part of the implementation of the Water Act 2003.

WALES

Departmental Estate

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total floor space area is of buildings *(a)* owned and *(b)* leased by (i) his Department and (ii) its agencies. [18470]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office has no agencies. It owns one building with total floor space of just under 500 square metres and leases premises of 637 square metres.

Departmental Stationery

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department has joined the Watermark project. [18468]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003, the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). DCA is a member of the Watermark Project. Details can be found on the DCA website: www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the Department's main suppliers of *(a)* copier paper, *(b)* stationery, *(c)* envelopes and *(d)* paper for reports, in each case stating (i) the name of each paper used and (ii) the (A) recycled and (B) post-consumer recycled content of each paper. [18469]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA). It uses the DCA contract with Office

Depot for copier paper, stationery, and envelopes. Figures are held for the consumption of recycled paper by the DCA as a whole, but information for the Wales Office could be made available only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Water and Sewerage

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the annual spending by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies on water and sewerage services has been in each year since 1997. [18139]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office was established July 1999. The Wales Office installed a water meter in June 2003. A settlement figure of £3,561 was paid on installation for usage from July 1999 to June 2003.

Since then, spend on water and sewage has been:

Financial year	£
2003–04	[1]830.93
2004–05	865.05

[1] From June only.

Figures for financial year 2005–06 will be available in April 2006.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales at which non-office sites on his estates he has identified opportunities for significant water savings. [18141]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office does not have any non-office sites.

Out-of-hours GP Services

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Government on the cross-border implications of improvements to the out-of-hours GP services in Wales. [20570]

Mr. Hain: I regularly meet with the Health Minister and we discuss a range of health issues. The National Assembly for Wales in conjunction with Local Health Boards are monitoring the performance of providers and look for continual performance improvement.

Patients are treated by the clinician best equipped to meet their needs in the most appropriate location, regardless of where they are resident.

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what arrangements his Department has to report publicly on its key sustainable development impacts. [18090]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). We have adopted the DCA corporate policy for Sustainable Development, which is published on the DCA website.

www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what parts of his Department's estate will not be covered by the commitments set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. [18130]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). It is a small department, having only one building in London, but lease office space in Cardiff. It is fully covered by the commitments outlined in the DCA's Sustainable Development Policy, which is on the DCA website.

www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps have been taken by his Department to review its arrangements for public reporting of its sustainable development impacts. [18134]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). It adopts DCA's Framework on Sustainable Development, which provides for yearly reporting. Further details are on the DCA website.

www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm.

Video Conferencing

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number of such facilities. [18464]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office has two video conference units, one in the Cardiff office and one in the London office. There are no plans to increase the number of such facilities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list each constituency which contains a proportion of the 0.2 per cent. of telephone lines in England which cannot at present get broadband. [20352]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 20 October 2005]*: The information is not available in the form requested.

Regional Industrial Development Boards

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1063W, on regional industrial development boards, what the budget of each board was in each year of their operation. [22306]

Alun Michael: The question is based on a misapprehension. Boards are not allocated a budget. Details of the regional spend dealt with by the Boards can be found in the Industrial Development Act 1982 Annual Report which is available in the Libraries of the House.

Telephone Nuisance

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what factors are affecting the timing of the publication by Ofcom of new guidance on reducing the level of telephone nuisance from predictive diallers. [21826]

Alun Michael: The timing of any announcement is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. My officials have asked the Chief Executive Officer of Ofcom to reply to the hon. Member and to send me a copy for his response. Copies of the Chief Executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will press Ofcom to use its powers to prevent silent calls. [21828]

Alun Michael: I am confident that the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the independent regulator for the communications sector, will do everything in its power to prevent silent calls. Ofcom derives its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, so it is accountable to Parliament in its own right. The Government take the issue of silent calls very seriously because of the distress they cause to consumers. My officials are in regular contact with Ofcom and encourage us to use its powers effectively to the fullest extent.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Leavers (Basic Skills)

3. **Mr. Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures her Department is taking to improve the standard of basic skills of school leavers. [22043]

Jacqui Smith: A grounding in functional skills is essential. The 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper set out our plans to toughen GCSEs so that no-one can get a higher grade in English and maths without achieving mastery of the functional basics. We are also introducing a general diploma to recognise those who achieve five good GCSEs or equivalent, including English and maths. Functional English and maths will be a core element of our new specialised diplomas.

Classroom Assistants

13. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many classroom assistants were employed in *(a)* Nottinghamshire and *(b)* England in (i) January 1997 and (ii) January 2005. [22053]

Jacqui Smith: In January 1997 there were 1,300 teaching assistants employed in the Nottinghamshire area. This number had increased to 3,100 by January 2005. The equivalent figures for England were 60,600 in 1997 and 148,500 in 2005.

Post-16 Funding

14. **Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the difference in funding levels between school sixth forms and post-16 provision in further education. [22054]

19. **Mr. Jeremy Browne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the differences between the funding formulas for colleges and school sixth forms. [22059]

Phil Hope: We have acknowledged that despite significant investment in Further Education and a narrowing of the difference between funding rates, there remains a funding gap between school sixth forms and colleges. We have been clear that continuing progress on narrowing the gap will not be easy and will depend on the resources available. However, we are committed to exploring the scope for addressing the technical anomalies between the school sixth form and further education funding systems and will set out the way forward in the near future.

GCSE Mathematics Results

15. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the 2004–05 GCSE mathematics results. [22055]

Ruth Kelly: Provisional 2005 results show that the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in maths GCSE increased by 2 percentage points to 52 percent.—the biggest increase since 1997. That means that around 53,000 more pupils are now achieving a good pass in maths than did so in 1997.

These results represent excellent progress. But we recognise there is further to go and that is why we are continuing to push for even higher standards in the basics.

Teacher Training (PE)

16. **Mr. Andy Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to improve teacher training for physical education. [22056]

Jacqui Smith: The Training and Development Agency for Schools has put in hand a three year programme to improve the quality of initial teacher training for physical education. It has engaged Liverpool John Moores university—the leading provider of PE teacher training—to work with the British Association of Advisors and Lecturers in PE and the Physical Education Association to identify good practice in the training of PE teachers and to disseminate this to other providers. This programme will be completed by March 2007.

Part-time Students

17. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on financial support for part-time students. [22057]

Bill Rammell: Part-time undergraduate provision is important to hundreds of thousands of individual students and to the economic success of this country. We are determined to see the vibrant part-time sector sustained. From 2006, the maximum available support available to low-income part-time students to help them meet the cost of tuition fees will increase by 27 percent. from £885 to £1,125. Resource from the access to learning fund will increase from £3 million to £12 million to provide still greater additional fee support and general hardship support for students in the most challenging financial circumstances.

Sure Start

18. **Dr. Starkey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to extend the Sure Start programme. [22058]

Beverley Hughes: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Betts).

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) in how many local Sure Start programmes are *(a)* 0 to 5, *(b)* 6 to 10, *(c)* 11 to 15, *(d)* 16 to 20, *(e)* 21 to 25, *(f)* 26 to 30, *(g)* 31 to 35, *(h)* 36 to 40, *(i)* 41 to 45, *(j)* 46 to 50 and *(k)* 50 and over per cent. of registered children were attending at least one Sure Start activity per month on the latest available date; [22001]

(2) what assessment she has made of the performance of each local Sure Start programme in reaching new families and children in the relevant local area; [22003]

(3) how many Sure Start local programmes are using a centralised database to collect information on *(a)* new babies and *(b)* new families in the local area. [22004]

Beverley Hughes: Sure Start local programmes are expected to visit all new babies in their area within the first two months of their life. However, we do not expect programmes to see every child and family each month. On average we would expect fully operational programmes to see over a quarter of children living in their area, with 20 per cent. of these being new children.

Sure Start local programmes are not required to collect data on the percentage of children attending at least one Sure Start activity per month.

Each Sure Start local programme is required to submit an annual data return which includes figures for families and children reached during one specified month within the year. At March 2005 the national average for children aged under four seen by local programmes was 23 per cent. of which 13 per cent. were new children.

Sure Start local programmes are not required to use a centralised database to collect information on new babies and new families in the local area. Some Sure Start local programmes have formal data sharing arrangements with local health trusts, but local programmes also access a variety of sources for gathering data on new babies and new families from schools, health visitors, midwives, parent support networks and outreach work with local community organisations.

Each Sure Start local programme is expected to carry out an evaluation of its services, including whether they are reaching all local children, and to improve their working practices and processes where appropriate.

Selective Education

20. **Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the merits of selective education; and if she will make a statement. [22060]

Jacqui Smith: If all local education authority areas returned the same value added as selective local education authority areas, the average results would improve by the equivalent of about one and a half grades in one subject at GCSE.

However, this calculation does not take account of the different characteristics of pupils educated in different LEAs. The Government's position on selection is clear. It is socially divisive, we do not support it and we do not wish to see it extended.

Further Education

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils aged 16 to 18 have been educated in *(a)* further education colleges and *(b)* sixth forms in schools, in England since 2000, broken down by local authority. [15877]

Bill Rammell *[pursuant to the reply, 10 October 2005, Official Report, c. 344W]:* The accompanying tables contained an error—the columns were transposed and incorrectly labelled.

Participation in full-time education of 16 and 17-year-olds by local authority in England, end 2000 onwards

Number

	School sixth forms (including independent)				*FE colleges (including sixth form colleges)*[1]			
	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
North East	16,000	16,800	17,000	17,100	23,200	23,600	24,000	24,100
Hartlepool	300	300	300	300	1,300	1,200	1,200	1,300
Middlesbrough	300	300	300	400	2,300	2,300	2,200	2,300
Redcar and Cleveland	–	100	100	100	2,100	2,100	2,100	2,300
Stockton-on-Tees	700	800	800	800	2,600	2,600	2,600	2,600
Darlington	200	300	200	200	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,400
Durham	3,200	3,500	3,400	3,400	3,900	4,000	4,000	3,900
Northumberland	3,700	3,800	3,800	3,800	1,400	1,300	1,300	1,300
Gateshead	1,700	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,100	1,400	1,400	1,400
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,900	3,000	3,100	3,200	1,100	1,200	1,100	1,100
North Tyneside	1,500	1,700	1,700	1,700	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,500
South Tyneside	300	300	400	400	1,700	1,900	2,200	2,100
Sunderland	1,000	1,200	1,300	1,300	2,900	3,000	3,100	3,100

Participation in full-time education of 16 and 17-year-olds by local authority in England, end 2000 onwards

Number

	School sixth forms (including independent)				*FE colleges (including sixth form colleges)*[1]			
	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
North West	39,800	40,500	41,000	41,200	68,800	70,900	73,900	74,800
Halton	500	500	400	400	1,400	1,500	1,800	2,000
Warrington	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,800	1,800	1,900	2,000
Cheshire	6,500	6,300	6,400	6,500	5,000	5,200	5,400	5,100
Cumbria	4,600	4,800	4,700	4,800	2,900	3,100	3,000	3,100
Bolton	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,000	2,800	2,700	2,700	2,800
Bury	500	600	600	600	2,500	2,700	2,800	2,800
Manchester	2,000	2,000	2,100	2,200	4,800	5,000	5,500	5,600
Oldham	1,200	900	900	900	2,800	2,900	3,000	3,000
Rochdale	800	1,000	900	900	2,200	2,200	2,400	2,500
Salford	100	200	200	200	2,400	2,600	2,800	2,800
Stockport	600	700	800	800	4,100	4,000	4,100	4,100
Tameside	300	300	300	300	2,900	3,100	3,100	3,200
Trafford	1,700	1,600	1,600	1,700	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,100
Wigan	500	600	600	500	3,800	3,900	4,100	4,100
Blackburn with Darwen	600	700	700	700	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,200
Blackpool	300	400	400	400	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,700
Lancashire	4,800	5,100	5,000	5,100	13,300	13,300	13,700	13,900
Knowsley	300	700	700	700	1,800	1,900	1,900	1,900
Liverpool	4,300	4,300	4,500	4,500	2,500	2,700	2,800	2,900
St. Helens	1,000	900	900	900	1,900	1,900	2,000	2,000
Sefton	2,600	2,300	2,400	2,300	2,900	2,900	2,900	3,000
Wirral	3,400	3,500	3,600	3,700	1,900	2,100	2,000	2,100
Yorkshire and the Humber	34,700	35,500	36,100	36,600	40,400	42,200	43,200	44,000
East Riding of Yorkshire	2,900	2,900	2,900	3,000	2,200	2,200	2,400	2,500
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	500	700	700	700	2,700	3,000	3,100	3,400
North East Lincolnshire	400	500	500	500	2,100	2,200	2,300	2,300
North Lincolnshire	300	300	300	300	2,300	2,300	2,400	2,500
York	1,200	1,400	1,300	1,400	1,600	1,700	1,600	1,600
North Yorkshire	6,100	5,700	5,800	5,900	3,500	4,300	4,100	4,200
Barnsley	300	400	400	400	2,400	2,500	2,500	2,600
Doncaster	2,600	2,600	2,700	2,800	1,700	1,700	1,800	1,700
Rotherham	1,800	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,300	2,300	2,400	2,400
Sheffield	2,100	2,500	2,600	2,800	4,200	4,100	4,300	4,600
Bradford	5,200	5,900	5,800	5,900	2,600	2,600	2,800	2,700
Calderdale	2,000	2,000	2,100	2,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Kirklees	1,700	1,800	1,700	1,600	4,500	4,600	4,600	4,600
Leeds	6,000	5,700	5,900	6,000	4,100	4,400	4,600	4,700
Wakefield	1,700	1,700	1,800	1,700	3,100	3,200	3,200	3,200
East Midlands	35,600	36,200	36,700	37,700	28,300	30,200	31,000	31,300
Derby	1,500	1,600	1,700	1,700	1,900	1,800	1,800	1,800
Derbyshire	5,700	5,900	5,900	6,000	4,400	5,100	5,300	5,400
Leicester	1,000	1,300	1,400	1,500	3,900	4,100	4,200	4,300
Rutland	600	700	700	700	400	400	400	400
Leicestershire	7,000	6,900	6,800	7,100	3,300	3,400	3,500	3,500
Lincolnshire	5,800	5,600	5,500	5,800	4,000	4,500	4,500	4,500
Northamptonshire	6,600	6,700	6,900	6,900	3,300	3,500	3,600	3,900
Nottingham	1,100	1,300	1,400	1,500	2,600	2,700	2,700	2,600
Nottinghamshire	6,200	6,200	6,300	6,400	4,500	4,800	5,000	5,100
West Midlands	39,100	40,100	40,700	41,700	46,600	47,300	48,700	49,400
Herefordshire	600	700	700	600	2,000	2,100	2,100	2,200
Worcestershire	5,300	5,300	5,300	5,600	4,300	4,400	4,500	4,600
Telford and Wrekin	800	600	700	700	1,900	1,900	2,000	2,000
Shropshire	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,900	3,000	2,900	3,000	3,200
Stoke-on-Trent	300	500	500	500	2,900	2,800	2,800	2,800
Staffordshire	7,500	7,600	7,700	7,900	5,600	5,800	5,600	5,800
Warwickshire	4,200	4,200	4,300	4,500	4,000	4,000	4,200	4,200
Birmingham	7,500	7,700	7,800	7,800	9,600	9,900	10,200	10,000
Coventry	3,000	3,100	3,200	3,300	1,900	1,900	2,000	1,900
Dudley	400	600	600	600	3,700	3,700	4,000	4,100
Sandwell	1,000	1,200	1,300	1,500	2,800	2,900	3,100	3,000
Solihull	1,300	1,200	1,200	1,200	2,300	2,400	2,500	2,400
Walsall	2,700	2,800	2,700	2,700	1,500	1,400	1,500	1,600
Wolverhampton	2,500	2,700	2,700	2,800	1,200	1,200	1,400	1,500
East of England	48,100	49,000	49,800	49,800	38,700	38,300	40,100	41,900
Luton	200	400	400	500	2,900	2,800	3,100	3,100
Bedfordshire	4,800	4,900	5,100	5,000	1,700	1,800	2,000	2,100
Peterborough	2,000	1,700	1,700	1,600	800	800	900	900
Cambridgeshire	3,700	4,100	4,200	4,100	5,200	5,300	5,300	5,600
Southend-on-Sea	1,400	1,200	1,300	1,300	1,200	1,100	1,200	1,200
Thurrock	—	100	100	100	1,800	1,900	1,900	2,000
Essex	9,100	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,800	10,400	10,900	11,300
Hertfordshire	14,400	13,700	14,200	14,500	5,600	5,300	5,300	5,400
Norfolk	5,500	5,800	5,700	5,600	5,500	5,400	5,800	6,100
Suffolk	6,900	7,100	7,000	7,000	3,300	3,600	3,800	4,100

Participation in full-time education of 16 and 17-year-olds by local authority in England, end 2000 onwards

Number

	School sixth forms (including independent)				*FE colleges (including sixth form colleges)*[1]			
	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
Greater London	58,700	62,300	63,900	67,100	54,700	56,200	59,200	59,800
Inner London	17,100	18,600	19,000	19,800	21,800	22,500	23,900	24,100
Outer London	41,700	43,700	44,900	47,300	32,900	33,600	35,200	35,800
Barking and Dagenham	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,400	1,000	1,000	1,100	1,200
Barnet	4,100	3,800	3,900	4,100	1,800	1,900	1,900	1,900
Bexley	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,400	1,300	1,400	1,400	1,400
Brent	2,300	2,800	2,900	3,200	2,100	2,200	2,300	2,200
Bromley	4,100	3,800	3,900	4,000	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,100
Croydon	2,300	2,700	3,000	3,200	3,300	3,300	3,500	3,600
Ealing	2,300	3,200	3,300	3,400	2,300	2,200	2,300	2,300
Enfield	3,000	3,100	3,000	3,100	2,000	2,000	2,300	2,300
Enfield	3,000	3,100	3,000	3,100	2,000	2,000	2,300	2,300
Greenwich	1,700	2,000	2,100	2,300	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,500
Harrow	800	2,000	2,100	2,200	2,700	2,800	2,800	2,800
Havering	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,100	2,600	2,600	2,700	2,700
Hillingdon	2,900	2,800	2,800	2,800	1,300	1,400	1,600	1,600
Hounslow	2,800	2,100	2,200	2,200	1,400	1,500	1,500	1,500
Kingston upon Thames	1,900	1,600	1,600	1,800	900	900	900	900
Merton	900	1,300	1,400	1,400	1,500	1,400	1,500	1,600
Redbridge	4,100	3,600	3,500	3,700	1,200	1,400	1,400	1,400
Richmond upon Thames	1,000	1,300	1,300	1,400	1,400	1,500	1,500	1,600
Sutton	2,600	2,000	2,100	2,200	1,000	900	1,000	1,000
Waltham Forest	800	1,300	1,300	1,300	2,600	2,700	2,900	3,000
South East	70,200	70,700	71,800	73,200	63,200	64,700	67,000	69,200
Bracknell Forest	1,300	1,400	1,400	1,400	700	700	700	800
Reading	1,400	1,500	1,500	1,500	700	800	800	700
Slough	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,200	800	900	1,100	1,000
West Berkshire	2,600	2,300	2,200	2,300	600	600	700	600
Windsor and Maidenhead	2,200	2,100	2,200	2,300	600	600	600	500
Wokingham	1,900	2,000	2,100	2,300	800	900	900	800
Milton Keynes	1,900	2,400	2,400	2,500	800	1,000	1,200	1,300
Buckinghamshire	6,600	6,400	6,700	6,700	2,000	2,200	2,100	2,000
Brighton and Hove	1,600	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,100	2,100	2,100	2,200
East Sussex	3,100	3,300	3,100	3,200	4,800	4,900	5,200	5,300
Portsmouth	500	500	500	400	2,200	2,300	2,500	2,700
Southampton	400	400	400	300	2,500	2,700	2,600	2,600
Hampshire	2,900	3,200	3,200	3,200	17,100	17,700	18,200	19,100
Isle of Wight	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	800	800	800	800
Kent	16,100	16,100	16,400	16,900	6,800	6,800	7,300	7,500
Medway	2,800	2,700	2,800	2,900	1,600	1,600	1,700	1,500
Oxfordshire	6,600	6,900	7,000	7,200	3,500	3,100	3,000	3,200
Surrey	10,200	10,200	10,500	10,500	8,200	8,500	8,500	9,100
West Sussex	5,500	5,300	5,400	5,500	6,700	6,600	7,100	7,300
South West	42,200	42,700	43,300	44,500	37,900	38,400	40,000	40,800
Bath and North East Somerset	2,500	2,200	2,100	2,100	900	900	1,000	1,100
Bristol, City of	2,600	3,000	3,200	3,100	2,700	3,000	3,000	3,200
North Somerset	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,600	1,500	1,500	1,600
South Gloucestershire	2,400	2,300	2,200	2,300	1,500	1,500	1,600	1,600
Cornwall	2,900	3,000	3,000	3,000	5,600	5,500	5,700	5,600
Plymouth	3,100	2,900	2,800	2,900	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,200
Torbay	1,300	1,200	1,200	1,300	700	700	700	700
Devon	4,900	5,500	5,700	5,900	5,700	5,600	5,700	5,900
Bournemouth	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,200	1,200	1,300	1,200
Poole	1,500	1,400	1,500	1,600	900	900	900	800
Dorset	4,200	4,500	4,500	4,800	2,100	2,200	2,400	2,300
Gloucestershire	6,000	5,900	6,200	6,400	3,400	3,400	3,600	3,700
Somerset	3,400	3,500	3,600	3,700	5,300	5,400	5,500	5,600
Swindon	400	400	300	400	2,200	2,400	2,500	2,800
Wiltshire	4,200	4,400	4,400	4,400	3,100	3,200	3,300	3,400
	384,400	393,900	400,200	409,000	401,800	411,700	426,900	435,300

[1] Further education colleges will include a small number of 16 and 17-year-olds in HE institutions.
[2] Provisional.

Pupil Referral Units

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role pupil referral units play in supporting children in education. [21081]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities use pupil referral units (PRUs) as part of a spectrum of provision to meet the educational needs of pupils in their area who, for reasons of illness, exclusion or otherwise, are unable to attend mainstream schools.

The main role of PRUs is to ensure that pupils continue to receive an education while not attending mainstream or special schools. PRUs offer their pupils additional support and motivation in order to prepare them for reintegration to mainstream schooling. However, pupils will only be readmitted into

mainstream settings when they are ready to benefit from it without disrupting the learning of other pupils. Pupils who need to remain in PRUs for longer periods are offered an education which is appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude and to any specific needs they may have.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Finance

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what core elements make up the £6,459,000 spent by his Department on planning. [20748]

Yvette Cooper: In 2004–05 the administration expenditure of the planning directorate within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was £6,827,726. The core elements were the staff and non-pay running costs of delivering:

	£000 (rounded)
The review, development and implementation of new national planning policies on housing, countryside, town centres and economic development and on planning obligations.	1,073
The review and development of national planning policies on minerals, waste, contaminated land and flooding, casework on mineral planning appeals and marine minerals dredging, and negotiation for the UK of the EU directive on waste from the extractive industries.	1,102
The implementation of reforms in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) to the system of development control, local authority performance and incentive grants.	940
The implementation of reforms contained in the PCPA 2004 to the plan making system at regional and local level, policies on compulsory purchase and negotiations on EU environmental assessment directives, Interreg structural funds and international planning matters.	1,492
Planning and compulsory purchase bill and coordination of implementation of PCPA 2004, e-planning in local authorities and changing the culture of the planning system.	510
Casework on planning decisions made by Ministers	907
Senior management, directorate administration and central services.	803

Fire Control Centres

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what he estimates the total cost will be of establishing the nine regional fire control centres. [22244]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on the 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 609–10W.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total annual running costs were of emergency fire control rooms in each of the last five years. [22245]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Fire and Rescue Authorities do not keep separate figures for their total spending on control centres: the CIPFA statistics cover control room staffing costs only. Therefore the FiReControl project had to commission detailed work on current and forecast costs as a basis for the FiReControl Business Case in 2004. The current version of the business case includes an average forecast cost of £75.6 million per annum as total cost of providing control services from 2004–05 to 2006–07, at 2004 prices.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the initial estimates were of the cost of establishing the nine regional fire control centres. [22246]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Initial estimates of the cost of establishing nine regional control centres were provided in the Strategic Outline Business Case, which was based on the report by Mott MacDonald 'The Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales: Update 2003'. Mott MacDonald calculated that over a 10 year period, at 2004 prices, the regional control option would deliver a total net saving of £155 million. It estimated project costs at £100 million, comprising project management costs, technology costs, accommodation costs and redundancy. The Outline Business Case (available on www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk) was based on more detailed work and different assumptions, so the costs shown in that cannot be directly compared with the Mott MacDonald costs.

Key Worker Living Initiative

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes have been built in *(a)* each borough in Hampshire, *(b)* Southampton and *(c)* Portsmouth under the Key Worker Living Initiative; and how many of these are occupied. [12754]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is as follows:

Local authority	*Units completed up to 30 September 2005*	*Units occupied up to 30 September 2005*	*Units reserved/awaiting occupancy up to 30 September 2005*
Rushmoor	22	0	15
Basingstoke and Dean	27	24	3
East Hampshire	13	9	0
Isle of Wight	5	2	3
Eastleigh	11	0	2
Southampton	119	12	0
New Forest	9	2	7
Fareham	29	0	1
Portsmouth	32	0	0
Havant	34	1	0
Winchester	14	0	13

Of the 310 units completed so far in Hampshire, 48 are occupied with a further 44 reserved or in the process of being bought/let. Of the 218 units not yet taken, 142 were completed since July, including 32 units in Portsmouth and 55 units in Southampton.

All Key Worker Living units in Hampshire have now been given an expanded eligibility criteria in response to local market conditions.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the average proportion of local government expenditure that is financed from council tax in *(a)* local authorities in England, *(b)* district councils, *(c)* unitary councils, *(d)* London boroughs, *(e)* Metropolitan authorities and *(f)* county councils. [19916]

Mr. Woolas: The average percentage of Revenue Expenditure[1] that is financed from council tax for 2005–06 is tabled.

[1] Revenue Expenditure comprises expenditure financed from formula grants, specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, council taxes and the use of reserves.

		Percentage
(a)	England	25.4
(b)	Shire district councils	42.9
(c)	Unitary councils	24.7
(d)	London boroughs (including City)	21.4
(e)	Metropolitan borough councils	20.6
(f)	County councils	30.8

Source:
RA returns to ODPM

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the average gearing ratio in *(a)* local authorities in England, *(b)* district councils, *(c)* unitary councils, *(d)* London boroughs, *(e)* Metropolitan authorities and *(f)* county councils. [19914]

Mr. Woolas: The gearing ratio is a measure of the impact that increasing budgets has on council taxes. Listed in the following table are average gearing ratios derived from data on RA returns supplied to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for 2005–06. The ratios have been calculated as revenue expenditure divided by the council tax requirement for the relevant authorities:

		Average gearing ratios
(a)	England	3.9
(b)	Shire district councils	2.3
(c)	Unitary councils	4.0
(d)	London boroughs	4.7
(e)	Metropolitan district councils	4.9
(f)	County councils	3.2

Pathfinder Renewal Project

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the electoral wards in Newcastle and Gateshead where the demolition programme funded by the Newcastle-Gateshead Pathfinder in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 are to take place, broken down by number in each ward. [21773]

Yvette Cooper: Demolitions funded by the Newcastle Gateshead housing market renewal pathfinder have taken place in the following wards:

	2004–05	*Qtr 1 and 2 2005–06*	*Qtr 3 and 4 2005–06*
Ward	*Actual*	*Actual*	*Forecast*
Walker	6	12	26
Kenton	60	21	42
Fenham	98	15	0
Elswick	8	0	160
Scotswood and Benwel	203	52	48
Bridges and Felling	34	164	124
Deckham	0	0	20
Total	409	264	420

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the effective rate of employer contributions is to final salary pension schemes in the public sector for firefighters. [21587]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded scheme; accordingly there is no employers' contribution and pensions are paid from revenue. The current estimated cost of the scheme is 37.5 per cent. of pensionable pay and members pay a contribution of 11 per cent.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 396W, on local government pensions, if he will publish the figures available for each of the separate pension fund authorities in England. [19707]

Mr. Woolas: Local government pension funds in England and Wales have advised that the total cost to all scheme employers of reinstating the rule of 85 in the scheme, with effect from 1 April 2005, is £435 million for 2005–06. Details of individual pension fund costs are available on the LGPS website at:

www.xoq.83.dial.pipex.com.

Regional Spatial Strategy

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the Milton Keynes and South Midlands regional spatial strategy. [19638]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already taken significant steps to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is being put in place to develop sustainable communities outlined in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub regional strategy March 2005 (MKSM SRS). The MKSM SRS provides strategic guidance on the scale, location and timing of

development and associated employment, transport and other key infrastructure over the next twenty years ensuring that growth is undertaken in a planned and sustainable manner.

The MKSM Inter-regional Board established in February 2004 , which I chaired on the 4 October ensures that all agencies deliver investment and policy commitment to meet the objectives in the strategy. The board is made up of some 30 organisations, including key strategic public and private sector partners.

Through the growth areas fund, in the period 2003–08 we are making up to £364 million available for the newer growth areas, including up to £230 million for the MKSM area. This funding will support a range of projects which will unlock development sites and ensure that new and expanding communities have the facilities that they need.

All four growth areas will benefit from the creation of a new community infrastructure fund (CIF), which will be held within the Department for Transport's budget. This Fund will provide an extra £200 million for transport infrastructure in the growth areas over the SR04 period. The MKSM area will receive around £111 million from the fund.

Mainstream funding from other departments has also been increased to reflect growth within the sub region.

Finally local delivery vehicles have been established in the region to drive and coordinate the growth of the area using land assembly, investment and planning roles to create confidence and stimulate private investment.

Respect

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding he plans to provide to the Home Office's unit dealing with respect issues; and if he will make a statement. [20458]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is making a substantial contribution to the respect agenda. A number of our programmes are supporting the work of the respect unit, notably the examples as follows.

Our core programme is the 'Cleaner Safer Greener' strand of our work with local authorities which involves a commitment of £105 million over two years.

The £1.05 billion neighbourhood renewal fund enables local partnerships to make respect a key priority.

The safer and stronger communities fund provides a further £122 million on top of the funding for the cleaner safer greener strand of our work.

The supporting people programme enables local authorities to provide housing related support services to assist in addressing the respect agenda.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Lupus

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was made available by his Department for research into effective treatment of lupus in each of the past five years; and if he will increase future funding levels. [22344]

Mr. Woodward: The HPSS research and development office has not funded research into the treatment of Lupus in the last five years.

The HPSS research and development office will make decisions on future funding for research into this condition on receipt of applications made by research departments in universities and hospitals in line with priorities set within the HPSS research and development strategy and available resources. In common with other NHS R&D strategies, the HPSS R&D strategy is neither disease specific nor disease driven.

Tax Credits (Helpline)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps have been taken to improve the public telephone helpline of the regional Inland Revenue office for tax credit inquiries from Northern Ireland. [17126]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

We are currently planning to link the Northern Ireland tax credits helpline to the main HMRC contact centre network. This will increase the pool of people available to deal with calls, hence improving the service of the Northern Ireland tax credits helpline.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Prosecutor's Pledge

22. **Mr. Khabra:** To ask the Solicitor-General what steps the Crown Prosecution Service plans to take to help victims as part of the prosecutor's pledge. [22034]

The Solicitor-General: Under the prosecutors pledge, the CPS will protect the interests of victims from charging to any possible appeal in a number of ways. An assessment will be made of the needs of a victim, for example, perhaps to be a witness in a trial they might need transport, child care or an interpreter. This may be provided. Victims can be protected from unwarranted character attacks during a trial or plea in litigation. This is the first time the level of service to victims by the CPS has been set out in one document and published.

Non-stranger Rape

26. **Judy Mallaber:** To ask the Solicitor-General if he will investigate what further steps can be taken to improve the conviction rate in prosecutions for non-stranger rape. [22039]

The Solicitor-General: It is difficult to secure convictions in non-stranger rape cases. Very often there are no independent witnesses and frequently no forensic evidence.

I am working closely with the CPS to look at a variety of ways in which more can be done to build stronger cases and assist victims to give better evidence. This will improve conviction rates.

In particular, I am interested in seeing experts give evidence concerning the psychological impact of rape on victims. This would better inform juries by addressing some of the myths that persist around rape.

Crown Prosecution Service

Ms Keeble: To ask the Solicitor-General what steps he is taking to speed up decision-making in the Crown Prosecution Service. [22038]

The Solicitor-General: The decision to prosecute is made on a case by case basis and is only taken following a thorough review of the available evidence by a Crown prosecutor, in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Every effort is made to make these decisions within a reasonable time period. However, due to the complexity of some cases, some decisions may take longer.

European Convention on Human Rights

Simon Hughes: To ask the Solicitor-General what advice the Department has provided on the compatibility of extended detention without charge with the European Convention on Human Rights. [22040]

The Solicitor-General: We do not disclose outside Government the content of law officer advice nor whether or not such advice exists. This is in line with the practice of successive Governments.

Dead Bodies (Identification)

Jon Trickett: To ask the Solicitor-General which agencies work with the police and coroners in the task of identifying dead bodies discovered in the UK; and what the respective roles are of *(a)* the coroners, *(b)* the police and *(c)* other agencies. [21346]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

A number of agencies work with the police and coroners on the identification of dead bodies. These include the Forensic Science Service, pathologists and the National Missing Persons Helpline. The coroner's role is to investigate sudden, violent or unnatural deaths in order to determine who the deceased was, and how, when and where they came by their death and to enable the death to be properly registered. The role of the police and other agencies is to assist the coroner in performing these functions.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Solicitor-General how many unidentified corpses are held in morgues in England and Wales; and how many have been unidentified for more than *(a)* 12, *(b)* 18 and *(c)* 24 months. [21347]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not held centrally.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Solicitor-General what guidance is issued to coroners on the use of DNA samples in establishing the identity of dead persons. [21348]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Coroners determine the means of identification and we have not issued guidance to them on the use of DNA samples in identifying deceased persons.

Domestic Violence

Barbara Follett: To ask the Solicitor-General what steps he is taking to increase the support provided to victims of domestic violence in the criminal justice system. [22035]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service is committed to ensuring that victims of domestic violence are adequately protected and supported nationwide. As part of this commitment it has devised and published progressive domestic violence policy, guidance and training to equip prosecutors.

The Crown Prosecution Service has a national network of domestic violence co-ordinators, including one in Hertfordshire, to implement policy, address problems and share good practice.

All of the criminal justice units in Hertfordshire have a specialist domestic violence champion. They are tasked to liaise with other agencies to support victims, raise awareness of their concerns and represent the CPS in the local domestic violence forum.

Financial Ombudsman Service

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Solicitor-General what representations he has received from and on behalf of independent financial advisors on the Financial Ombudsman Service; and if he will make a statement. [23153]

The Solicitor-General: I am not aware of any such representations.

Fraud Convictions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Solicitor-General how many people have been convicted of fraud in London in each year since 1997. [8200]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply. Data from the Home Office court proceedings database on the number of people convicted for fraud in London, 1997 to 2003 is contained in the table. Statistics for 2004 court proceedings will be available in the autumn.

Offenders found guilty at all courts for fraud offences in London (metropolitan and city of London police force areas), 1997 to 2003[1]

	Number of total fraud offences
1997	2,711
1998	3,002
1999	2,918
2000	2,906
2001	2,604
2002	2,782
2003	2,735

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

TREASURY

Business Conduct

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend the time allowed for return of the twice yearly questionnaire required of businesses operating

under the conduct of businesses rules; and if he will reconsider the decision to require that this process is undertaken bi-annually. [22483]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) is operationally independent of the Government and is responsible for determining what information it requires authorised persons to submit on a regular basis, how frequently they should submit that information and within what timeframes. That information can relate to conduct of business rules and the current return that collects this information on a bi-annual basis is the retail mediation activities return (RMAR) which is required to be submitted within thirty business days. The FSA shall be writing to the hon. Member shortly about these issues.

Cash Machines

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the increase in the numbers of fee-charging cash machines on low income households. [21862]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Work is under way through the Financial Inclusion Taskforce to explore how the financially excluded access their cash and transmit money. Among other things, this work will identify the extent to which fee-charging ATMs are disproportionately used by the financially excluded. The results of this work are due next year.

In addition, the Treasury continues to maintain regular contact with Link to discuss issues relating to the ATM market and to keep up to date with any developments.

Child Benefit

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have received child benefit in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire, *(c)* the West Midlands and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [22158]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 305–06W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Jarrow (Mr. Hepburn).

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter to the Paymaster General from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire (PO Ref: 4/22437/2005). [22138]

Dawn Primarolo: A reply has been sent to the hon. Member.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will obtain an answer from the chairman of HM Revenue and Customs to the letters to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 18 August and 23 September with regard to Mr K. Akhtar, following reference of that case to the chairman by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in July. [22671]

Dawn Primarolo: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on the day that he tabled his question.

Financial Services Authority

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the role of the Financial Services Authority with regard to *(a)* the burden of administration its procedures involve and *(b)* the effectiveness of its complaints procedures. [22482]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury's Two-Year Review of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), the outcome of which was announced in December 2004, included a reduction in Financial Services Authority (FSA) consultation burdens and reforms making the FSA handbook of rules easier to use. The FSA has subsequently launched other initiatives to simplify its handbook of rules further. The administrative burden associated with requirements to report information to the FSA is currently being assessed by independent consultants as part of the Government's initiative to assess all such burdens generated by all Government bodies and regulators. In parallel the FSA has commissioned independent consultants to assess the cumulative burden of all forms of financial regulation in three business sectors. A person dissatisfied with the FSA's response to a complaint may approach the Office of the Complaints Commissioner, which publishes an annual report. In light of these reports there are no current plans to review the FSA's complaints procedures.

Gift Aid

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been lost to his Department in relation to the Gift Aid scheme in each year since its inception; what estimate has been made of the cost of *(a)* allowing charitable donations by non-taxpayers to qualify at the standard rate and *(b)* applying the scheme at the standard rate to charitable donations on which Gift Aid is not claimed; what estimate has been made of the cost to charities of implementing the scheme; and what has been estimated as (i) the total value of charitable giving, (ii) the proportion eligible for the scheme and (iii) the proportion subject to the scheme in each year since the scheme's inception. [22418]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not maintain figures for the total value of charitable giving. Donations to charities under Gift Aid and covenants and payroll giving back to 1990–91 are available on the HMRC website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/charities/menu.htm. Provisional figures for 2004–05 show total repayments to charities under Gift Aid of £625 million. HMRC does not maintain estimates for the cost of allowing charitable donations by non-taxpayers to qualify at the standard rate, nor on applying the scheme at the standard rate to charitable donations on which Gift Aid is not claimed. Likewise, HMRC has made no estimate of the cost to charities of implementing the Gift Aid scheme.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) for what reasons his Department has re-interpreted the arrangements for charities which can disregard admission charges in return for gift-aided donations; [22484]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of free admission to larger museums on smaller charities, with particular reference to Gift Aid. [22485]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer to him of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1312W.

Free admission to certain larger museums was introduced by the Department for Culture Media and Sport in December 2001. HM Revenue and Customs have not made any assessment of the impact of this measure on smaller charges.

HM Revenue and Customs

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate was of *(a)* early retirement and *(b)* resignation on grounds of stress and ill health in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in each of the last two years in each region and country of the UK; and what the rate was for staff working on tax credits. [19271]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is as follows:

(a) The rate of retirement on the grounds of ill health in HM Revenue and Customs in each of the last two financial years was:

In the former Inland Revenue

	Rate per 1,000 staff
2003–04	2.3
2004–05	1.72

In the former Customs and Excise

	Rate per 1,000 staff
2003–04	1.9
2004–05	2.2

Information on the percentage of these requirements due specifically to stress is not available.

(b) The rate of resignations on grounds of ill health in HM Revenue and Customs in each of the last two financial years was:

In the former Inland Revenue

	Rate per 1,000 staff
2003–04	28.8
2004–05	33.9

In the former Customs and Excise

	Rate per 1,000 staff
2003–2004	21.7
2004–2005	25.1

These figures have been derived from the HR records of the former Departments and from information supplied by BMI health services, (now Capita health services) who are the medical advisers to the principal civil service pension scheme. Information identifying stress and ill health by region and country and to staff working on tax credits could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

National Insurance/Income Tax

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of combining national insurance with income tax. [22069]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax and national insurance have different structures. Many of the differences between the two systems result from the fact that they serve different purposes. Income tax is designed to raise revenue for public spending while NICs are directly linked to entitlement to contributory benefits. Since Martin Taylor's report on work incentives in 1998, the Government have been pursuing a policy of alignment as far as is possible, for example replacing the multiple employer rates with a single rate of national insurance for employers, and aligning the starting point for paying both employers' and employees NICs with the income tax personal allowance. HMRC continues to work with employer representatives and others to look for opportunities to align the tax and NICs rules at a practical level, while having regard to the individuals' benefit entitlements.

National Minimum Wage

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been paid the minimum wage in each year since it was introduced. [21958]

Dawn Primarolo: The DTI estimates that 970,000 workers in Great Britain stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI has estimated that 1.3 million workers would be covered by the October 2005 uprating of the national minimum wage.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assumptions about the reform of public sector pension scheme retirement ages are contained within existing public expenditure estimates; and if he will make a statement. [21461]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 25 October, *Official Report*, column 314W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Chris Huhne) of 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 417W, on self-invested pension plans, if he will make a statement on what would constitute abuse of the new rules. [19717]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government keep all aspects of the tax system under review and as the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made clear, if there is any evidence of abuse in this area, we will take appropriate action to stop it.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his latest estimate is of the value of tax credit overpayments written off from *(a)* 2003–04,

(b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06 to date as a result of (i) software errors, (ii) manual payments and (iii) official error; [19171]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the value of tax credit overpayments which have been written off by the Revenue in (a) 2003–04, (b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06 to date; and if he will make a statement; [19178]

(3) what his latest estimate is of the value of tax credit overpayments which have been written off by HM Revenue and Customs in (a) 2003–04, (b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06 to date; and if he will make a statement. [20690]

John Barrett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his latest estimate is for the value of tax credit overpayments written off in (a) 2003–04, (b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06 to date, broken down by those resulting from (i) software error and (ii) clerical error; [19745]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the value of tax credit overpayments which have been written off by HM Customs and Revenue in (a) 2003–04, (b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06 to date; and if he will make a statement. [19748]

Dawn Primarolo: For the value of tax credit overpayments written off as a result of software errors I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave him on 4 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 101W.

For the amount written off in respect of manual payments in 2003–04, I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the Comptroller and Auditor General's Standard Report on the Accounts of the Inland Revenue for 2004–05. This is available on the internet at:

www.nao.org.uk

For amounts written off as a result of official error, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 282W.

HM Revenue and Customs wrote off around £71 million as official error relief from July 2005 to the end of September 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent changes to the tax credit computer system which provide information on processing errors with tax credit awards. [17285]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 13 October 2005]*: The problems that occurred at the time tax credits were introduced have been addressed and the IT system is now stable and operating well in terms of speed and accessibility. Having established the integrity of the IT system and significantly improved its performance, the priority for HMRC must be to maintain that and make sure that further IT changes take place in an orderly way. Further improvements to the IT system remain a priority, however, and HMRC is working to create a more flexible IT system that will allow improvements to be made much more quickly.

HMRC are also working to improve their management information systems to help identify problems with the IT system earlier.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances (a) a married couple and (b) an unmarried couple previously treated as a family for tax credit purposes is treated as separated for tax credit purposes; and if he will make a statement. [20019]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on how a family break up can affect tax credits awards is available in the changes section of the new tax credits manual which can be viewed on the HMRC website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/ntcmanual/index.htm

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the revenue yield would be of (a) abolishing the family element of child tax credit and (b) withdrawing the family element of child tax credit on family incomes of over £30,000. [20023]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated reductions in expenditure as a result of these options, calculated for 2005–06, are:

(a) abolishing the family element of child tax credit: around £3 billion per year.

(b) withdrawing the family element of child tax credit on family incomes over £30,000: around £0.6 billion per year.

These figures were calculated using the department's tax and benefit model (IGOTM) based on data from the Family Resources Survey 2003–04.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what proportion of child care tax credit claims have been (a) inaccurate and (b) fraudulent; [20150]

(2) how many fraudulent tax credit claims over £1,500 there were in (a) 2003–04 and (b) 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [20151]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC is carrying out a random inquiry programme of a representative sample of finalised claims across the tax credit population to measure the level of error and error in tax credits. Final results for the 2003–04 exercise will be published in spring 2006.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Leader of the House what assessment he has made of the (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills of new recruits to his Office. [21001]

Nigel Griffiths: Staff within the Leader of the House of Commons Office are supplied by the Privy Council Office (PCO). The PCO uses a competency based staff recruitment and appraisal system. Communication is one of these competencies and it encompasses a wide range of skills, the level of which is dependent on the individual post. In addition, each member of staff has a personal development plan, tailored to meet their training and development needs.

Hon. Members' Offices (Broadband)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Leader of the House how many hon. Members' constituency offices have been connected to broadband; and how many hon. Members who have

applied for broadband in their constituency offices have been waiting to be connected for (*a*) six months, (*b*) one year and (*c*) two years and over. [22297]

Nigel Griffiths: 404 current Members have been connected to broadband in their constituency by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD). In addition to this number, some Members may have made their own arrangements to procure a broadband connection in their constituency, for which there are no central records.

The broadband connection is needed to support Parliament's Virtual Private Network (VPN) service. Where Members have the upgraded Personal Computers necessary to support VPN, orders to install are generally being completed within 28 days of their receipt.

Not all Members took up an invite to upgrade their Personal Computers and this has resulted in a very small number of MPs who have recently requested broadband and VPN services without the necessary upgraded Personal Computers to support it. However, they will have their equipment replaced in the first phase of a large PCD project due to commence in November and this will ensure that their requests can be met.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are (*a*) eligible for council tax benefit and (*b*) in receipt of council tax benefit in (i) Basingstoke, (ii) Hampshire and (iii) England. [21696]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information on the take up of council tax benefit is not available below national level. The latest available information is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2002/2003", a copy of which is in the Library.

Information on council tax benefit recipients is not available by Parliamentary constituency. The available information on those pensioners in receipt of council tax benefit is in the table.

Council tax benefit caseloads for claimants aged 60 and over: February 2005

	Number
England	2,050,500
Hampshire	34,700
Basingstoke and Deane borough council	3,800

Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
5. Figures refer to cases where the claimant and/or partner is aged 60 or over.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System
Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in February 2005.

Departmental Priorities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the Department's priorities for the next year. [21268]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The Department for Work and Pensions priorities for the next five years are set out in the Department's Five-Year Strategy "Opportunity and security throughout life", Cm 6447, which is available in the Library.

These are:

ensure the best start for all children and end child poverty by 2020;

promote work as the best form of welfare for people of working age and remove barriers to work (thereby move towards the aim of 80 per cent. of the working population in employment), while protecting the position of those in greatest need;

combat poverty and promote security and independence in retirement for today's and tomorrow's pensioners;

improve rights and opportunities for people with disabilities in a fair and inclusive society;

ensure customers receive a high-quality customer service, including high levels of accuracy and the avoidance of fraud.

The public service agreement targets agreed in Spending Review 2004 for the Department for Work and Pensions outline the Departmental aims, objectives and performance targets, and who is responsible for their delivery. The PSA took effect from April 2005.

The principles which underpin this reform agenda were published in 'Principles for Welfare Reform' in October 2005.

Employment (Hornsey and Wood Green)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the levels of (*a*) employment and (*b*) income in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency; and if he will make a statement. [16944]

Margaret Hodge: In October 2005 we assessed the employment rate in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency to be 71.2 per cent.

In 2002–03 we estimate there to have been 55,000 taxpayers with a median income of £21,000, in Hornsey and Wood Green constituency. These are the latest available figures.

Job Vacancies

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many job vacancies there are in Doncaster, North constituency; how many there were 12 months ago; and what the national vacancy rate is per 1,000 of population. [15068]

Margaret Hodge: Jobcentre Plus handles only a proportion of vacancies notified by employers. Consequently the figures do not represent the total number of job vacancies available in Doncaster, North. Jobcentre Plus vacancy data by parliamentary constituency was made available for the first time in June 2005 with back data to November 2004.

The following table shows the number of unfilled vacancies held by Jobcentre Plus in Doncaster, North constituency.

Period	Number of unfilled vacancies
November 2004	760
September 2005	440

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Labour Market System

The number of job vacancies in the United Kingdom in the three months to September 2005 is provisionally estimated as 625,100 on average (seasonally adjusted) based on the Office for National Statistics' Vacancy Survey. This represents a ratio of 24 unfilled vacancies per 1,000 employee jobs or 17 unfilled vacancies per 1,000 of population of working age. Job vacancy figures are published in table 21 of the ONS monthly Labour Market Statistics First Release.

For comparison, the number of job vacancies in the United Kingdom in the three months to September 2004 is estimated as 643,200 on average (seasonally adjusted) based on the Office for National Statistics' Vacancy Survey. This represents a ratio of 25 unfilled vacancies per 1,000 employee jobs or 17 unfilled vacancies per 1,000 of population of working age.

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been contacted by the Highways Agency regarding compulsory purchase orders on property affected by the proposed A21 upgrade. [22339]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency have not contacted any individuals regarding compulsory purchase orders on property affected by the proposed A21 upgrade as the draft orders have not yet been published or made.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many properties have been purchased by the Highways Agency in connection with the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. [22340]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has purchased four properties in connection with the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice the South East of England Regional Assembly has given in connection with the proposed A21 upgrade. [22341]

Dr. Ladyman: The joint Treasury/DTI/DfT/ODPM document, "Regional Funding Allocations—Guidance on Preparing Advice", published in July 2005, included indicative annual spending guidelines for expenditure on housing, transport and economic development, and explained the basis of the regional advice ,that the Government would like to receive by the end of January 2006.

I am aware that the South East Transport Board has recently considered the relative priority of a number of major transport projects, including some on the A21. However the Board has not completed its work and when it has, its views will feed into the wider advice requested. I expect that advice to be submitted to Government in January next year.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list compulsory purchase orders made in connection with the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge; and what the average payment made has been. [22342]

Dr. Ladyman: No compulsory purchase orders have been published or made in connection with the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge.

A38 Roadworks

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the economic impact on the Plymouth travel to work area of the 25 week extensive roadworks to the A38. [22242]

Dr. Ladyman: The roadworks on the A38 between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh in Devon have been planned to minimise delays to traffic by carrying out the work between September and March.

Prior to the work commencing, modelling work was undertaken to assess the extent of the anticipated delays to traffic and extensive publicity was undertaken to encourage drivers to avoid using the road during peak times.

During the roadworks, traffic flows and delays are being monitored to assess the effects on traffic.

Following completion of the works, the overall impact of the works will be assessed to see what lessons can be learned for future roadworks on the A38 in Devon.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the roadworks to the A38 are being carried out on a 24 hour a day basis; and if he will make a statement. [22243]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has explored every opportunity to reduce the length of time it will take to carry out the roadworks on the A38 between Ashburton and Buckfastleigh in Devon. Together with local authority environmental health officers, the agency has carefully considered the possibility of 24 hour working but this was rejected because of the effects of noise on local residents. Planning conditions to control noise also apply to the operation of the quarry that is being used to provide materials for the work.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21924]

Ms Buck: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently. The Department for Transport and its agencies have targets of between seven and fifteen working days for replying to such correspondence.

All correspondence from hon. Members and peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in "Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments".

Information relating to the performance of departments in replying to Members/peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [20996]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport operates competency based recruitment when recruiting new employees. For posts recruiting below SCS the department follow DfT's competency framework. For posts recruiting at SCS level the department follow the competency framework set by the Cabinet Office.

Specialist posts (i.e. accountants) do undergo some form of numeracy tests provided by an external agency.

We do not assess literacy skills of new recruits.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21123]

Ms Buck: The Department offers a wide range of training in both literacy and numeracy to all its staff, including learn direct courses, access to further education, learning resource centres and specific training courses. Development needs are normally identified as part of the performance management processes that are in place, but staff can discuss their needs at any time with their managers.

Greenhouse Emissions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his policy on encouraging the reduction of greenhouse emissions within the transport industry. [22540]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's policies on reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from all sectors, including the transport sector, will be set out in the revised UK Climate Change Programme, which is due to be published before the end of the year.

Motorway Roadworks (Safety)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what policy considerations underlay the decision not to publish the Transport Research Laboratory report entitled "Safety performance of traffic management at major motorway roadworks (TRL595)". [22135]

Dr. Ladyman: It is Government policy that whenever possible reports of research carried out at public expense should be made available to the public. The policy considerations underlying the decision on the form of publication of research reports is based on the cost of publication and the potential public interest in the subject matter.

The Executive Summary of the TRL Report "Safety performance of traffic management at major motorway road works. (TRL 595)—2004" was published on the Highways Agency Research Compendium website in 2004. A link to the TRL website is available from which copies of the full report may be purchased.

National Boatmaster's Licence

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure that the introduction of a national boatmaster's licence will not adversely affect standards of safety on the River Thames. [21460]

Dr. Ladyman: The proposals for a new national boatmaster's licence have been developed in consultation with representatives of industry, and relevant port and navigation authorities. In the case of the tidal River Thames, this is the Port of London Authority (PLA).

New Drivers (First Aid Education)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the merits of introducing an element of first aid education for new drivers; and if he will make a statement. [22147]

Dr. Ladyman: The syllabus for the driving theory test taken by candidates seeking a licence to drive a car, motorcycle, lorry or bus requires a basic knowledge and understanding of first aid. Every theory test includes a question on first aid and a separate question on accident handling. The Government considers this is the appropriate way to assess competence in basic first aid matters within the driving test.

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) is working with the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance to improve new drivers' awareness of first aid within the existing driving test.

Private Car Park Operators

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what controls are in place to regulate the maximum *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalties applied by private car park operators. [17264]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Privately owned and run car parks are not subject to the provisions of the Private Security Industry Act 2001 or the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The terms and conditions under which they are operated is therefore a matter for the owner and operator of the car park, not the Government. Vehicle immobilisers who have been employed by private car park owners to clamp cars and charge a fee to the owners who contravene the terms and conditions of parking are required to be licensed by the Security Industry Authority (SIA).

A507

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding traffic and pedestrian safety measures for the A507 between Shefford and Campton in Bedfordshire; and if he will make a statement. [22072]

Dr. Ladyman: I have not received representations for this stretch of the A507, but I understand that Bedfordshire county council, as the local highway authority, has received representations relating to a number of sites on the A507.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* accidents and *(b)* fatalities have been recorded on the A507 between Shefford and Campton in Bedfordshire in each year since 1996; and if he will make a statement. [22073]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury accidents on the A507 between Shefford and Campton between 1996 and 2004 is shown in the following table.

	Number of personal injury accidents
1996	0
1997	1
1998	1
1999	1
2000	2
2001	0
2002	2
2003	1
2004	2

None of the accidents resulted in a fatality.

Road Safety

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is on *(a)* on-surface pedestrian crossings, *(b)* speed limits and *(c)* sub-surface pedestrian crossings for main trunk roads; and if he will make a statement. [22074]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's policy for the provision of pedestrian crossings takes the form of advice, guidance and recommendations which are set out in Local Transport Note 1/95 "The Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings", while more specific advice for main trunk roads is to be found in TA 91/05 "Provision for Non Motorised Users", which is contained in Volume 5 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Both these documents are in the House of Commons Library.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Government have spent on promoting *(a)* traffic and *(b)* pedestrian safety in the county of Bedfordshire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [22076]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government fund local transport schemes, including those specifically related to road safety, through the Local Transport Plan integrated block allocation and the maintenance block allocation. It is for individual local highway authorities, in this case Bedfordshire county council, to decide how this block funding is allocated.

HEALTH

NICE

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new chemical entities are awaiting assessment by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE); whether the average number of new chemical entities awaiting assessment by NICE has changed since it was established; what the average time taken between submission of a new chemical entity and assessment is; and if she will make a statement. [19231]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* No new chemical entities were referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) until September 2003. Since September 2003, a total of seven chemical entities have been referred to NICE. All seven are on NICE'S current work programme.

New chemical entities are defined as new compounds not previously used to treat any condition.

Dentistry

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Department is taking to clarify the *(a)* detail and *(b)* structure of the proposed units of dental activity to be required to be delivered as part of the new dental contract for NHS dentists; what action is being taken by her Department to facilitate the establishment of the proposed new NHS dental practice in Chard at the Chard Business Park; and if she will make a statement. [20781]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 October]:* The system of units of dental activity is derived from the proposed banded dental charging system. The details and structure of the proposed units of dental activity were included in the draft general dental services contract and personal dental services agreement regulations published in August. Units of dental activity correspond to courses of treatment, weighted into three bands to reflect their relative average complexity.

Table one shows units of dental activity in respect of banded courses of treatment.

Table 1: Course of treatment

	Units
Band 1 (excluding urgent treatment)	1.0
Band 1 (urgent treatment only)	1.2
Band 2	3.0
Band 3	12.0

Table two shows units of dental activity in respect of charge exempt course of treatment.

Table 2: Course of treatment

	Units
Issue of a prescription	0.75
Repair of a dental appliance (denture)	1.0
Repair of a dental appliance (bridge)	1.2
Removal of sutures	1.0
Arrest of bleeding	1.2

The Department agreed resources to establish a new practice operating under personal dental services in Chard in April. The application is now being taken forward by the South Gloucestershire primary care trust.

Prescriptions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-payment certificates for prescriptions have been issued in Lancashire in each of the last 12 months. [21896]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* Information on the number of pre-payment certificates (PPCs) issued for Lancashire is not separately identifiable. However, the number of PPCs issued for England, by month for each of the last 12 months is shown in the table.

Month/year	*Number of PPCs issued for England*
October 2004	92,845
November 2004	83,363
December 2004	73,876
January 2005	95,978
February 2005	81,638
March 2005	125,477
April 2005	97,265
May 2005	82,803
June 2005	96,670
July 2005	91,852
August 2005	83,077
September 2005	86,549

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the Director of Finance of his Department is; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [20267]

Mr. Straw: The Finance Director of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is Mr. D R Todd. He has no specialist finance qualifications. Three of his direct staff are qualified accountants (head of Resource Accounting Department; head of Financial Planning and Performance Department; and head of Internal Audit Department) and one is a qualified procurement specialist.

Mr. Todd was appointed in 2004 after an inter-departmental competition by a panel which included the head of the Government Accountancy Service, Andrew Likierman. He has served in a number of positions in London and overseas. He worked in Her Majesty's (HM) Treasury from 1995 to 1997 and 1998 to 2001 and was HM ambassador to the Slovak Republic from 2001 to 2004.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21005]

Mr. Straw: Minimum educational requirements relating to literacy and numeracy differ for each level of entry. New recruits to our support and junior management grades require GCSE grades A*-C in English Language and Mathematics. Policy entrants require a minimum 2:2 degree in any discipline and Diplomatic Service Economists require a 2:1 or above, or a postgraduate degree in economics, joint or mixed degrees are acceptable, provided that 50 per cent. of the course modules are in economics.

In addition, during the recruitment process candidates at all the above entry points are required to take ability tests, which test verbal, numerical and reasoning skills.

For specialist campaigns the Foreign and Commonwealth Office use the services of an occupational psychologist to design and administer assessment centres.

For senior recruitment campaigns we are guided by the Office of the Civil Service Commissioner.

Embassies

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the UK embassies which cover other countries, giving in each case the other countries covered. [20548]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has 28 embassies and high commissions where the resident ambassador or high commissioner is accredited to one or more other countries in addition to their accreditation to the host state. The following table provides further details.

Non-resident ambassadors and high commissioners offer a cost effective way of providing diplomatic representation in countries where we have chosen not to establish an embassy or high commission. They are widely used by other foreign services. Overall, the UK has resident representation in more countries than almost any other nation.

Embassy/High Commission	*Countries covered*
BE Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Djibouti
BE Almaty, Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan
BE Bangkok, Thailand	Laos
BE Berne, Switzerland	Liechtenstein
BE Buenos Aires, Argentina	Paraguay
BE Dakar, Senegal	Cape Verde Guinea-Bissau Mali
BE Guatemala City, Guatemala	El Salvador Honduras
BE Kigali, Rwanda	Burundi
BE Kinshasa, Congo DR	Congo (Rep)
BE Luanda, Angola	Sao Tome and Principe
BE Madrid, Spain	Andorra
BE Rabat, Morocco	Mauritania

Embassy/High Commission	Countries covered
BE Rome, Italy	San Marino
BE San Jose, Costa Rica	Nicaragua
BE Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	Haiti
BHC Abuja, Nigeria	Benin
BHC Accra, Ghana	Burkina Faso Niger Togo
BHC Bridgetown, Barbados	Dominica St. Kitts and Nevis
BHC Colombo, Sri Lanka	Maldives
BHC Freetown, Sierra Leone	Liberia
BHC Georgetown, Guyana	Surinam
BHC Kingston, Jamaica	Bahamas
BHC Nairobi, Kenya	Somalia
BHC Port Louis, Mauritius	Comoros Madagascar
BHC Pretoria, South Africa	Lesotho Swaziland
BHC Suva, Fiji	Kiribati Marshall Islands Micronesia Nauru Palau Tuvalu Vanuatu
BHC Wellington, New Zealand	Samoa
BHC Yaounde, Cameroon	Central African Republic Chad Equatorial Guinea Gabon

Note:
BE: British Embassy
BHC: British High Commission

Heads of State (Visits)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions in the last 30 years a country has had its Head of State invited to make a state visit to the UK within 10 years of the previous visit. [22230]

Mr. Straw: There are six occasions of which I am aware. These were state visits by successive Heads of State of Nigeria in 1981 and 1989, France in 1976 and 1984, Saudi Arabia in 1981 and 1987, Norway in 1988 and 1994, South Africa in 1996 and 2001 and China in 1999 and 2005.

Iraq

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when each decree made by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq expires; and if he will arrange for the texts of the decrees to be *(a)* placed in the Library and *(b)* posted on his Department's website. [20987]

Dr. Howells: Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Orders remain in effect until they are properly amended or rescinded by the Iraqi Government.

CPA orders can all be found on the CPA website at www.cpa-iraq.org. A link to this can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at www.fco.gov.uk.

Israel

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will call on the Israeli Government to co-operate with the International Atomic Energy Agency in an inspection programme of all appropriate sites in Israel. [21204]

Dr. Howells: The Government take appropriate opportunities to discuss all aspects of non- proliferation with representatives of the Israeli Government. We have, on a number of occasions, called on Israel to accede to the Nuclear Non- Proliferation treaty, and to conclude a full scope safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the establishment of a middle east zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems, as set out in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995.

Middle East (Chemical/Biological Weapons)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will support a programme of inspection, verification and monitoring of any stocks of chemical and biological weapons held by *(a)* Israel and *(b)* other states in the middle east. [21203]

Dr. Howells: The United Kingdom strongly supports the establishment of a middle east zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems, as set out in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995.

We fully support both the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and continue to work to achieve their universal adherence and implementation.

South Asia Earthquake

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to help British citizens to find information on the whereabouts of their relatives who may have been affected by the earthquake in South Asia. [21034]

Dr. Howells: Since the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October, the Government have taken a number of measures to assist British citizens trying to find information of their relatives' whereabouts. A 24 hour helpline was set up at the British high commission in Islamabad, a reception desk was set up at Islamabad airport that was staffed for all incoming international flights until 17 October and a consular team was despatched to Muzaffarabad on 9 October to liaise with British Nationals and local authorities in the worst affected areas. A consular presence was maintained in Muzaffarabad until 15 October. Since then our Honorary Consul, resident at Mirpur, together with consular staff at the British High Commission in Islamabad have continued to pursue any missing person cases with local authorities.

Visas

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005 to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Lynne Jones), *Official Report*, column 2414W, on visas, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increased refusal rate between December 2004 and February 2005. [20658]

Dr. Howells: The refusal rate for family-visit visas rose from 46.8 per cent. in December 2004 to 59.8 per cent. in January 2005, then fell to 40.7 per cent. in February.

UKvisas has not conducted a formal assessment of the increase between December 2004 and January 2005.

However, refusal rates during December and January can fluctuate due to higher last minute demand and lower quality of applications over the holiday period.

Zimbabwe

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many officials from his Department visited Zimbabwe in the summer to report on conditions in that country for returned failed asylum seekers. [19791]

Dr. Howells: A team of three Home Office and two Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials visited Harare between 4 and 10 September. The team was concerned with the issue of failed asylum seekers returned to Zimbabwe from the UK.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21002]

Mr. Thomas: The bulk of DFID recruitment is for advisory, specialist or senior managerial roles. A pre-requisite for these posts is a university education and relevant degree. New recruits to these roles normally undergo a competence based recruitment assessment. The literacy and numeracy of new recruits to junior administrative roles is tested using standard short answer tests.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21038]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the Member for Romford to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational health/publications/index.asp

DFID is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21117]

Mr. Thomas: DFID assesses literacy and numeracy skills as part of its recruitment processes. It also undertakes a range of activities to promote the maintenance and development of literacy and numeracy skills, examples of which are list as follows:

DFID has developed "brush up your skills" internal website pages. These provide learning tools, such as quizzes, to help staff assess their literacy and numeracy skills, as well as links to external providers of learning support on basic skills. Background information on Skills for Life and DFID's skills development plan can also be accessed on this site.

A copy of the employer tool kit on Adult Basic Skills is made available to managers to help them support staff with basic skills needs.

An annual in-house event in Adult Learning Week (last held in May 2005) is run with a focus on "brushing up your basic skills."

DFID procurement processes have assessment criteria to ensure all contractors have the relevant skills at the appropriate level for the contract. The vast majority of these are advanced beyond basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Direct Budgetary Support

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department will *(a)* monitor and *(b)* disaggregate information on how bilateral aid given under the method of direct budgetary support is spent. [21981]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) direct to partner governments' budgets to help implement their own poverty reduction strategies. A full fiduciary risk assessment is completed before PRBS is approved and this is regularly updated.

Benchmarks are agreed at the outset against which to assess progress in poverty reduction and where necessary, improvements to public financial management, together with monitoring, reporting and audit arrangements. Progress is reviewed before planned PRBS instalments are confirmed and funds released.

DFID does not disaggregate how individual PRBS commitments are spent. Statistics on International Development (SID) gives details of PRBS expenditure by country and by region and income groupings, at tables 11 and 12. SID also shows PRBS expenditure against policy priorities and millennium development goals, at tables 20 and 22. The latest version of SID document was published on 20 October and is available on-line and can be found located via the DFID website address at: www.dfid.gov.uk, copies of which will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses as soon as they are made available.

Food Emergencies

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what procedures his Department has in place to monitor early warning signals of food emergencies from *(a)* the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and *(b)* other bodies. [22008]

Mr. Thomas: DFID staff in the UK Representation to the UN Food and Agriculture Agencies in Rome and elsewhere monitor the Global Information and Early Warning System of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) of the US Agency for International Development. The UK Representation in Rome receives all food availability updates from the FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) and participates in regular discussions of impending and actual food emergencies with those agencies and other donors. DFID staff also regularly attend briefings on the joint FAO-WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions. To help improve the quality of information provided by WFP, DFID has funded the strengthening of WFP's Vulnerability Assessment Monitoring capacity.

Furthermore, DFID has staff in many countries that have traditionally experienced food emergencies, particularly in Africa. DFID staff in country offices and on country desks in London keep close track of the food availability situation in countries at risk. They also exchange information with other donors, host Governments, international agencies and non-governmental organizations. DFID is also helping to build local capacity to detect potential food emergencies, notably through funding local vulnerability assessment committees in Southern Africa.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of food emergencies in *(a)* Burkina Faso, *(b)* Burundi, *(c)* Chad, *(d)* the Central African Republic, *(e)* the Democratic Republic of Congo, *(f)* the Republic of Congo, *(g)* Cote d'Ivoire, *(h)* Eritrea, *(i)* Ethiopia, *(j)* Guinea, *(k)* Kenya, *(l)* Lesotho, *(m)* Liberia, *(n)* Malawi, *(o)* Mali, *(p)* Mauritania, *(q)* Niger, *(r)* Sierra Leone, *(s)* Somalia, *(t)* Sudan, *(u)* Swaziland, *(v)* Tanzania, *(w)* Uganda and *(x)* Zimbabwe, with particular reference to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Africa report of September. [22009]

Hilary Benn: DFID monitors the evolving food-security situation across Africa through our network of country offices, our humanitarian advisers, and a wide range of specialist partners including NGOs, the UN and Red Cross agencies. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)'s report is an important source of information, based primarily on food production. DFID takes this into account in making an overall assessment of the humanitarian situation, while also looking at vulnerability, access to food, coping mechanisms, nutritional status and other indicators.

In Southern Africa (including Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe), DFID has invested heavily in the vulnerability assessment committees (VACs), the main tool used by all partners, including national governments, to assess food emergencies. Based on the latest VAC assessments and other partners' surveys, DFID generally concurs with the broad findings in the FAO report. However, rather than

"12 million people in need of emergency food assistance",

we judge that there are 10.7 million people in the region facing food shortages. Many of these people will require emergency food aid, but some will manage until the next harvest using their own coping strategies and other non-food assistance. In Southern Africa, in response to our assessments, DFID has allocated a total of £56 million for humanitarian assistance and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

In West Africa, DFID has just undertaken its third humanitarian assessment mission since June, to the Sahel (including Burkina, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger). Based on these findings, and those of other partners, we concur with the FAO's September analysis. Moré recently we have judged agricultural production from the ongoing Sahel harvest to be high, bringing relief and recovery to many areas, but with pockets of continuing need due to localised shortages or the continuing consequences of the recent crisis. In the Mano river countries (including Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), insecurity and population movements have certainly undermined food security, as also suggested by FAO. In both sub-regions, DFID has delivered more than £9 million of humanitarian assistance this year to help address these concerns.

In East Africa., DFID has undertaken humanitarian assessments in Ethiopia and Eritrea. Humanitarian advisers based in Sudan constantly monitor the humanitarian situation there, including emerging food crises. The UK is spending £70 million on its humanitarian assistance in Sudan this year. In Ethiopia, DFID is contributing £43 million to a national safety nets programme providing food and cash to poor families. Eritrea continues to be affected by serious food shortages. It is however, becoming increasingly difficult for relief agencies to operate in the country, affecting the quality of data and the options for humanitarian assistance. The situation in Somalia is also of great concern as increasing insecurity in the grain producing areas of the south reduces the availability of food. Uganda and Tanzania have had good harvests. Civilians displaced by conflict in the north of Uganda, and refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Tanzania, are unable to support themselves and require continuing assistance, for which DFID is providing support.

In Central Africa, DFID assessments have been undertaken in the DRC and Burundi. We agree with the FAO's assessment that while production has generally been at or above average, serious food shortages remain among some groups, notably displaced people in the DRC. The Republic of Congo normally produces little food, being reliant on imports. The Central African Republic had a good harvest last year, but the basic indicators remain very poor. In addition insecurity in the north has led to difficulties for the population there, and has resulted in people seeking refuge in southern Chad. Chad also experienced an average year in terms of food production, but refugees there from Darfur, and Central African Republic are not able to produce or

purchase their own food. DFID has an assessment team in Chad looking at whether additional support is required over and above the £5 million already provided by DFID this year.

Kashmir

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has held with the Pakistan Government about long-term assistance following the Kashmir earthquake. [22705]

Hilary Benn: I met the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan on 20 October in Islamabad during my visit, to see the damage in Muzaffarabad and Balakot and to discuss what additional assistance was required.

An Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority (ERRA) has been set up with the Prime Minister as chair. The ERRA has asked the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to lead a high level needs assessment team over the next three weeks to prepare an outline plan and funding assessment for long term reconstruction needs. A report will be available by mid-November and a conference on reconstruction will be held in Islamabad on 18 November.

A Joint Government of Pakistan, major donors and the United Nations Steering Committee meets regularly to assess information, advise on lessons learned from other disasters and discuss key policy issues on, for example, death and injury compensation, new town development, and interim children's education. DFID's country head is a member of the Steering Committee.

DFID has an expanding long-term development programme in Pakistan with £74 million committed this financial year. Areas for support include primary health, education, water and sanitation, good governance and democracy, and income growth.

DFID's programme operates at the federal level, and in the Provinces of Punjab and North West Frontier (NWFP). We have already met with the Government of the NWFP to agree changing priorities in the light of the earthquake.

We will consider our response in Azad Jammu and Kasmir after we have been able to review the conclusions of the ERRA reconstruction needs assessment.

Low-income Countries

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's progress towards meeting its target for 2005–06 of having 90 per cent. of its budget spent in low income countries. [21412]

Hilary Benn: DFID has made steady progress towards its 2005–06 target to increase the proportion of DFID's bilateral programme going to low income countries to 90 per cent. by 2005–06. In 2003–04 we achieved 74 per cent. and in 2004–05, was achieved 83 per cent.

Planned allocations for 2005–06 put DFID on track to meet the target and progress will be monitored throughout the financial year.

Swaziland

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the UK provided to Swaziland in real terms in each of the last 20 years. [20940]

Hilary Benn: The UK has provided the following aid to Swaziland in real terms:

UK total bilateral gross public expenditure in real terms (2004)

	£000
1985	6,848
1986	4,899
1987–88	4,505
1988–89	3,990
1989–90	6,745
1990–91	7,707
1991–92	4,839
1992–93	5,621
1993–94	10,712
1994–95	3,313
1995–96	18,139
1996–97	11,608
1997–98	4,050
1998–99	4,558
1999–2000	3,967
2000–01	2,933
2001–02	1,387
2002–03	1,408
2003–04	926
2004–05	665

Total imputed UK share of multilateral official development assistance in real terms (2004)

	£000
1985	1,080
1986	940
1987	1,570
1988	1,490
1989	1,960
1990	1,650
1991	1,860
1992	1,880
1993	1,380
1994	2,280
1995	1,200
1996	1,230
1997	810
1998	1,090
1999	900
2000	1,230
2001	2,470
2002	760
2003	830

In addition, since 2001, approximately £1.7 million of DFID's contribution to the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and Malaria was spent in Swaziland. For the same period DFID also disbursed approximately £2 million that will benefit Swaziland through regional programmes.

Uganda

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is providing to Uganda in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [21694]

Hilary Benn: DFID has set aside £71.6 million for its programme to Uganda in 2005–06. This assistance is focused on support for the implementation of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). It includes an allocation of £50 million for Poverty Reduction Budget Support. DFID is also supporting projects which will help to improve governance and the capacity of the Government to implement their budget effectively. These include support for public service reform, public financial management, improved revenue mobilisation, anti-corruption institutions and Uganda's transition to multi-party politics. DFID has separate projects to support service provision in the key areas of health, HIV/AIDS, and water and sanitation. We are helping civil society and the private sector to contribute to the objectives of the PEAP. Substantial resources are set aside for humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution in northern Uganda.

UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with his G8 counterparts on the funding of the UN central emergency revolving fund. [22015]

Hilary Benn: At Gleneagles, G8 leaders welcomed the intention of donors to explore improving multilateral funding mechanisms such as the central emergency revolving fund. I continue to hold discussions with G8 development ministers about this.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding each of the G8 nations have *(a)* pledged, *(b)* committed and *(c)* spent on the UN central emergency revolving fund. [22025]

Hilary Benn: The UK has pledged $70 million (£40 million) to a revised and expanded central emergency revolving fund (CERF), this will increase further by $1 for every $3 donated by others once the total has reached $210 million, up to a maximum UK contribution of $100 million. The UN Office for the co-ordination of humanitarian affairs is preparing a detailed report on the accountability, governance, and management arrangements of the revised CERF for the UN General Assembly that will inform its consideration of the proposal in November. If approved, the revised CERF should be open for contributions in January 2006. So far no other G8 nation has pledged funds.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Government have to send more British troops to Afghanistan. [21059]

Mr. Ingram: It remains our intention to deploy the Headquarters Group of the ARRC to command ISAF for nine months from May 2006. Additionally, from next April we plan to move our forces from the north of Afghanistan to a base in Helmand province and establish a British-led Provincial Reconstruction Team, plus supporting forces, at Lashkar Gah as part of NATO expansion across southern Afghanistan.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will make a formal announcement to Parliament once we know the detailed force structure for our deployment to the south.

Americk Hayes

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* disciplinary and *(b)* remedial action took place in response to the bullying of Fusilier Americk Hayes at Catterick barracks. [21523]

Mr. Ingram: The Service Police Investigation is complete and their findings are now subject to legal consideration. It would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage.

Ammunition Manufacturers

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which bulk small arms ammunition manufacturers are *(a)* operating in the UK and *(b)* British owned. [19441]

Mr. Ingram: The only bulk supplier providing more than one million rounds per annum of small arms ammunition to the MOD is BAE Systems Land Systems, which operates in the United Kingdom and is a British company.

Deaths Investigations

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance he has issued on the co-operation to be offered by *(a)* British army units and *(b)* British military police posted abroad to civilian police forces in the conduct of investigations into deaths of army personnel. [21529]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch (RMP(SIB)) normally conduct all investigations into serious criminal offences committed by or against British Service personnel including incidents resulting in the death of Army personnel abroad. The SIB is a fully professional investigative agency conforming to Home Office standards and required by statute to follow civilian police force procedures. Jurisdiction related to investigations into deaths of Army personnel overseas is dependent on the various host nations' arrangements but is principally carried out by the RMP(SIB) who also act as the Coroner's Officer abroad. Investigative guidance to members of the Royal Military Police is contained within the Provost Manual.

The Queen's Regulations for the Army provide commanding officers with direction on the command and administration of their units, including matters related to deaths of Army personnel.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21011]

Mr. Touhig: Literacy and numeracy assessments in the armed services are conducted in either the recruiting process or at an early stage of initial training. Additionally, all Ministry of Defence personnel have the

opportunity to undertake an assessment of their literacy and numeracy abilities at an electronic learning centre. We recognise that literacy and numeracy weaknesses exist across the Department and we are addressing these as a high priority.

The Army is currently assisting DfES to develop its new literacy and numeracy initial assessment tools and when this becomes available all armed services will adopt this for use in the recruiting stage. The tool will also be used more widely to support the Department's intention to establish a baseline of its literacy and numeracy abilities across the whole of the armed services between April 2006 and March 2007. We are examining in parallel, the potential use of the new DfES initial assessment tool for new entrants to the MOD civil service.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21027]

Mr. Touhig: The following tables show the rates of worker sickness absence for non-industrial and industrial civil servants in the Ministry of Defence since 1997.

Non-industrial civil servants

	Sickness absence rate[1]
1997[2]	8.4
1998[2]	8.6
1999[3]	8.1
2000[3]	7.9
2001[4]	[5]—
2002[3]	7.3
2003[3]	7.6
2004[3]	7.3
Financial year	
2004–05[3]	7.3

[1] Sickness absence rates are based on Full-time Equivalent (FTE) working days lost. For example, if a part-time employee (working 50 per cent. full-time hours) is sick for seven calendar days, this is five working days lost and 2.5 FTE working days lost.
[2] Excludes non-industrial Ministry of Defence Staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from the Annual Report, "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service", which is published by the Cabinet Office.
[3] Excludes non-industrial Ministry of Defence staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from UK Defence Statistics 2005, Table 2.36, and are for calendar years (1 January to 31December) 1999 to 2004 and the financial year (1 April to 31 March) for 2004–05 . The rates shown have been formed using a standardisation technique which involves adjusting unreasonably long absence lengths and removing obviously incorrect records.
[4] There is no sickness absence information for industrial Ministry of Defence staff available for 2000 for data quality reasons.
[5] No reliable data available.

Industrial civil servants

	Sickness absence rate[1]
1997[2]	[5]13.7
1998[2]	[5]16.3
1999[3]	12.9
2000[4]	[6]—
2001[3]	14.8
2002[3]	13.4
2003[3]	12.5
2004[3]	13.2
Financial Year	
2004–05[3]	13.0

[1] Sickness absence rates are based on Full-time Equivalent (FTE) working days lost. For example, if a part-time employee (working 50 per cent. full-time hours) is sick for seven calendar days, this is five working days lost and 2.5 FTE working days lost.
[2] Excludes industrial Ministry of Defence Staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Sickness absence records for industrial staff are not as robust as for non-industrial staff and the early years are marked as provisional.
[3] Excludes industrial Ministry of Defence staff in Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. Rates are from UK Defence Statistics 2005, Table 2.36, and are for calendar years (1 January to 31December) 1997 to 2004 and the financial year (1 April to 31 March) for 2004–05 . The rates shown have been formed using a standardisation technique which involves adjusting unreasonably long absence lengths and removing obviously incorrect records.
[4] There is no sickness absence information for industrial Ministry of Defence staff available for 2000 for data quality reasons.
[5] Provisional.
[6] No reliable data available.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21111]

Mr. Touhig: Literacy and numeracy training to armed service personnel is provided through a combination of internal tutors and by arrangements with colleges of further education and private providers. The majority of this training is delivered on Ministry of Defence sites during working hours.

Literacy and numeracy training is also embedded in the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes offered in a wide range of trades across the armed services and the MOD civil service. In the year to 31 March 2005, some 6,500 personnel completed these schemes.

An internal network of over 140 electronic learning centres provide opportunities for all MOD personnel to pursue literacy and numeracy courses and sit on-line tests. In addition, MOD civil servants may be given time off to attend courses at a local college during working hours.

Discharge Statistics

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel *(a)* opted for an early discharge from duties, *(b)* opted against extending their service and *(c)* have been medically discharged in the last 12 months. [20836]

Mr. Touhig: In the 12 month period ending 1 August 2005,12,640 service personnel applied for premature voluntary release (PVR) and 9,200 service personnel outflowed on PVR.

PVR is defined as all applications and exits from trained personnel that are generated by the individual before their time expiry. Types of engagement and procedures for premature release differ between the services.

For the naval service data is provided for those who were specifically given the option of extending their service, in the 12 months to 1 August 2005.

Officers

	Offered	*Accepted*	*Didn't accept*
Total	320	310	[1]
IC[2] to CC[3]	250	240	[1]
CC[3] to FTC[4,5]	70	70	[1]

[1] Denotes zero or rounded to zero
[2] Initial Commission (usually 6 to 8 years)
[3] Career Commission (to latter of 16 years or age 38)
[4] Full Term Commission (age based depending on rank)
[5] Extended Service is only offered to personnel who put themselves forward and no record is kept of personnel who could have put themselves forward, but chose not to.

Other ranks: 1st open engagement (22 years) to 2nd open engagement (extra five or 10 years)

	Offered	*Accepted*	*Didn't accept*
Total	1,560	1,310	230
Royal Marines (Dec Board)	230	180	30
Royal Navy (May Board)	1,330	1,130	200

Not all individuals are given the option of extending their service, and it is not possible to identify how many people would or would not have opted against extending their service if given the choice. The option to extend service can be offered over a year before the current service is due to end.

The Army has no mechanism for recording when an individual chooses not to extend their service.

For the Royal Air Force, in the vast majority of cases it is not possible to tell whether an individual reaching the end of an agreed period of service has been offered the opportunity of further service. It is consequently not possible to tell how many personnel have turned down any offers.

In the 12 month period ending 1 August 2005, 1,180 service personnel outflowed on a medical discharge.

Harrier GR9

John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to revise the in-service date for the Harrier GR9; and if he will make a statement. [17463]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently no plans to revise the in-service date for Harrier GR9.

HMS Victory

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average annual cost of maintaining HMS Victory has been over the last five years. [21872]

Mr. Ingram: The average annual cost of maintaining HMS Victory over the last five complete financial years was some £1.1 million. This figure includes the cost of preservation, maintenance and restoration work.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether commanding officers in Iraq have been given authority to enter Iran in order to close off suspected arms supply routes. [20832]

John Reid: No.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists in Iraq have been classed as unfit since March 2003 and have since been classed as fit for mobilisation; and if he will make a statement. [21886]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Manning Control Reviews

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has sought a legal opinion on the compatibility of administrative discharge as a result of Manning Control reviews with *(a)* the Employment Rights Act 1996, *(b)* other employment legislation and *(c)* European law. [21536]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* I will write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what manning control reviews have been conducted in each of the last five years. [21537]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given on 27 November 2002, *Official Report*, column 333W and 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 961W, to the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Keetch).

There have been no discharges as a result of manning control point review since April 2002.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance he has issued on the conduct of manning control reviews; when the last occasion was on which such a review was the subject of a direction in daily orders; and if he will place copies of such *(a)* guidance and *(b)* directions in the Library. [21538]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* I will write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Nuclear Missiles (Security)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence further to his statement in the House of 7 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 481, on defence in the world, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of nuclear explosion in the UK arising from fissile material stolen in the former Soviet Union. [19070]

John Reid: Threats from all forms of terrorism, including nuclear, are kept under constant review. The UK is currently undertaking a series of projects under the Global Partnership to enhance material security across the former Soviet Union. In addition to Russian funded security enhancements, foreign-funded programmes to enhance nuclear safety and security at sites across the FSU have resulted in significant improvements to the overall security of fissile material in Russia.

Nuclear Reactors

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research into *(a)* fission and *(b)* fusion reactors his Department has funded in each year since 1975. [20978]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has not funded any pure research into fission or fusion reactors since 1975 and has no aspiration to change from the established pressurised water reactor type of technology employed in Royal Navy nuclear submarines.

Sustained Deployments

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last had discussions with the chief of the defence staff about the availability and preparedness of the armed forces for sustained deployment; and if he will make a statement. [20677]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 656W to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove).

Trident

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average length of tour of a Trident submarine was in the last period for which figures are available. [21606]

Mr. Ingram: The average length of a Trident patrol is between 70 and 80 days at sea. There is no set patrol length as this is varied between each individual patrol.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish a Green Paper setting out the options for replacement of Trident. [21697]

John Reid: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 619W, to the hon. Member for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore).

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the staff complement is of a Trident submarine, broken down by *(a)* rank and *(b)* function. [21698]

John Reid: The complement of a Trident Submarine is 17 officers and 134 ratings broken down by function and rank as follows:

	Number
Warfare department	
Commander	1
Lieutenant Commander	1
Lieutenant	6
Chief Petty Officer	4
Petty Officer	4
Leading Hand	9
Able Rate	19
Marine engineering	
Lieutenant Commander	1
Lieutenant	3
Warrant Officer 1	1
Warrant Officer 2	5
Chief Petty Officer	11
Petty Officer	8
Leading Hand	6
Able Rate	9
Weapon engineering	
Lieutenant Commander	1
Lieutenant	2
Warrant Officer 2	3
Chief Petty Officer	8
Petty Officer	9
Leading Hand	7
Able Rate	13
Supply department	
Lieutenant	1
Chief Petty Officer	1
Petty Officer	2
Leading Hand	5
Able Rate	8
Medical department	
Lieutenant	1
Petty Officer	1
Leading Hand	1

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the design life is of a Trident *(a)* nuclear warhead and *(b)* missile. [21901]

John Reid: Chapter 4 of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review indicated that we needed to ensure we could sustain Trident in-service for up to 30 years.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Trident missiles and *(b)* nuclear warheads for those missiles are stockpiled in (i) the UK and (ii) the US. [21902]

John Reid: As stated in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, the UK purchased 58 Trident II (D5) missiles. Missiles are either deployed onboard UK submarines or held ashore at the Royal Naval Armament Depot Coulport, on a temporary basis, or in the United States at the Strategic Weapons Facility Atlantic, as part of a shared pool of US/UK missiles. In line with the policy set out in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, the UK maintains a stockpile of fewer than 200 operationally available nuclear warheads, 48 of which are onboard the single submarine on deterrent patrol. The remaining warheads are held ashore in the UK; none is stored in the United States.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long it takes to target the missiles on board the Trident submarine fleet. [21903]

John Reid: All the UK's Trident missiles have been de-targeted since 1994, and the submarine on deterrent patrol is normally at several days notice to fire. The missiles can be targeted in sufficient time to meet any foreseeable requirement.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Swan Hunter has retained lead ship status on the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project; and if he will make a statement. [20389]

Mr. Ingram: Following a contract amendment in 2001, Swan Hunter acts as Lead Yard Supplier and Design Authority for the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) project. As such, the company is responsible not only for the construction of its own two vessels but also for delivery of design information to BAE SYSTEMS for the construction of their two vessels.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Active People Survey

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much *(a)* statutory funding and *(b)* National Lottery funding Sport England plans to spend on the Active People survey; and if she will make a statement. [21574]

Mr. Caborn: The cost of the Active People survey will be met by £6 million funding from the National Lottery.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Sport England plans to spend on the Active People survey, broken down by main cost area; and if she will make a statement. [21575]

Mr. Caborn: The survey is being carried out by Ipsos Mori on behalf of Sport England. The majority of the costs are connected to the fieldwork associated with the interview process. The approximate breakdown of costs are:

	£
Fieldwork	5.64 million
Pilot survey and pre-survey activities	72,000
Project management	132,000
Evaluation of data and other post-survey activities	156,000

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Sport England Active People survey is expected to be published; and if she will make a statement. [21576]

Mr. Caborn: The survey will be carried out over a 12-month period between October 2005 and October 2006. The results of the survey will be published in November 2006.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the objectives of the Sport England Active People survey are; and if she will make a statement. [21577]

Mr. Caborn: The survey will provide baseline data at the local authority level on participation in sport.

One of the main purposes of the survey is to inform local authority performance, which may have potential to inform the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Local authorities will also be able to use the data to inform their policy development and planning, and to target specific areas of improvement.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the sample size of Sport England's Active People survey will be; how this sample size was decided; and if she will make a statement. [21578]

Mr. Caborn: The sample size of the Active People Survey is 354,000, comprising 1,000 completed interviews per local authority area. This sample size is the minimum needed to provide statistically valid data on participation levels at the local authority level.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter of 22 August from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire (Ref: CMS 21128/DC). [22136]

Mr. Caborn: I wrote to the hon. Member for West Worcestershire on 24 October 2005.

Digital Television (Hertfordshire)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of *(a)* people and *(b)* households in (i) Hemel Hempstead constituency and (ii) Hertfordshire can receive analogue but not digital television signals. [22740]

James Purnell: The vast majority of households in the UK can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via at least one of digital satellite, digital terrestrial, cable or DSL broadband.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but the Government are committed to ensuring that at digital switchover everyone in the UK who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them on digital systems.

Drinks Pricing

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent meetings she has held with representatives of licensees with regard to the pricing of soft drinks; and if she will make a statement. [21377]

James Purnell *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not held any meetings with representatives of licensees to discuss the specific issue of the pricing of soft drinks.

However, in implementing the licensing reforms and as a partner taking forward the alcohol harm reduction strategy, my Department continues to work with industry representatives to ensure that retailers promote sensible drinking. Proper provision of soft drinks is important in this context, and in particular we welcome initiatives such as "I'll be Des", which encourages those who are driving to stick to soft drinks.

Licensing Act

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the establishment of the Licensing Fees Review Panel. [21477]

James Purnell: The Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel, chaired by Sir Les Elton, was established in summer 2005. The panel will consider whether the licensing fees, set by central Government, enable licensing authorities to recover fully their legitimate administration, inspection and enforcement costs, while at the same time achieve arrangements which are fair to business, non commercial organisations and to other individuals seeking licences. Over the last few months, the panel has commissioned evidence from around 70 stakeholder organisations touched by the new fees

regime. The panel will deliver an interim report shortly, followed by a final report in autumn 2006 detailing findings and where appropriate making recommendations for the development of the licensing fees regime.

Listed Buildings (VAT)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on reducing the effects of VAT on repair costs to owners of listed buildings; and if she will make a statement. [21469]

Mr. Lammy: My officials have had regular discussions with Her Majesty's Treasury on this issue, including in preparation of the Government response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Select Committee report on the role of historic buildings in urban regeneration in 2004. Together with ODPM, we will keep the impact of VAT on the repair, refurbishment and maintenance of buildings under review, but to date the case for change is unproven. Final decisions on transition issues are a matter for the Treasury.

Music Manifesto

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the music manifesto. [21482]

Mr. Lammy: The music manifesto, which celebrated its first anniversary in July, sets out a series of shared aims for music education for the next three to five years. The Government remains fully committed to the ambitions set out in the Manifesto.

Over 360 music organisations have now become signatories to the document, rising from 60 at the time of its launch. Over 140 pledges of programmes and resources have also been made.

My Department continues to work very closely with the Department for Education and Skills on this initiative, jointly funding the role of music manifesto champion, a position currently held by Marc Jaffrey.

The three workstrands identified for focused work by the signatories over the next 12 months are: workforce development; a national singing and vocal strategy; and the coordination of the formal and non-formal sectors.

National Lottery

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list lottery funds made available to fund projects in British overseas territories in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [22241]

Mr. Caborn: I am not aware of any funds from the national lottery which have been made available to projects in British overseas territories. The distributing bodies for national lottery funds are constituted to distribute lottery funding either on a UK wide basis or in a specific home nation of the United Kingdom.

The big lottery fund's international grants programme, which is currently being developed, will support the work of UK based charities and voluntary organisations working abroad.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the projects which have been unsuccessful when applying for a grant from the lottery fund in the last year for which figures are available; and for what reasons they were unsuccessful. [22641]

Mr. Caborn: This Department has never collected comprehensive information on either the number or value of applications for lottery grants received by the distributing bodies.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many winning national lottery tickets resulted in a pay out of *(a)* £50,000 to £499,999.99, *(b)* £500,000 to £999,999.99 and *(c)* more than £1,000,000 since 2001; and what the total amount of money paid out to winners was in each of these categories. [21654]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows.

Since 2001:

(a) 6,252 winning national lottery tickets resulted in a payout of £50,000 to £499,999.99. The total amount of money paid to winners was £818,239,766.08;

(b) 250 winning national lottery tickets resulted in a payout of £500,000 to £999,999.99. The total amount of money paid to winners was £177,319,376.30; and

(c) 847 winning national lottery tickets resulted in a payout of more than £1,000,000. The total amount of money paid to winners was £2,653,415,644.80.

These figures include draw based games and scratchcards.

Playing Field Sales

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is her policy to end the sale of playing fields; and if she will make a statement. [21488]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are committed to protecting playing fields wherever possible. Recently published statistics show that the legislative changes which we have introduced are working. In 2003–04 there was a reduction in the number of playing field losses to non-sporting developments, compared with the 2002–03 figures, and a net overall gain in school and community playing field provision. This is the first year that we can say that more playing fields have been created than lost.

We will continue to explore ways in which the legislation can be tightened further so that even more playing fields can be protected.

Private Finance Initiative

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what steps her Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to make the private finance initiative contracting process conducted by her Department more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability; [21836]

(2) what assessment she has made of *(a)* the sustainability and environmental impacts of private finance initiative (PFI) projects undertaken by her

Department and *(b)* the effectiveness of the PFI process followed by the Department in delivering environmentally sustainable projects. [21837]

James Purnell: The Department have not undertaken any PFI projects, nor does it have any current plans to do so.

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that private finance initiative projects for which her Department is responsible create the minimum of environmental damage. [21838]

James Purnell: The Department will ensure that any future PFI projects that it undertakes will follow DEFRA and Office of Government Commerce (OGC) guidance on sustainable development. The Department will also ensure that sustainability and environmental issues are considered when assessing the technical capacity of potential suppliers; and that environmental and sustainability requirements form part of its specifications in cases where the nature of the work is liable to have an impact on the environment.

Sustainable Development

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment is made *(a)* of the environmental impact and *(b)* against sustainable development criteria of bids for contracts awarded by her Department; who is responsible for making such assessments; and whether these assessments are published. [21839]

James Purnell: The Department requires bidders to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire which incorporates questions about their environmental capabilities. This is assessed prior to selection of candidates to participate in the tendering process.

The tender specification explains the Department's sustainability requirements. Sustainability criteria are weighted accordingly to the nature of the work and assessments are made by a team selected for their knowledge and experience in areas of the bid requirements, which may include environmental impact and/or sustainable development. Assessments are not published but are provided to bidders on request through a de-briefing process.

Swimming

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to increase participation in swimming; and if she will make a statement. [21487]

Mr. Caborn: £3.6 million is being provided by Sport England to the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) for the financial year 2005–06 through whole sport plans. Approximately half of this funding is to boost grassroots participation in swimming. Sport England is also working with Department of Health and the ASA to draw together best practice guidance in the provision of free swimming for key target groups, including children and older people to increase community participation.

Swimming also has a significant role to play within the national strategy for PE, school sport and club links, delivered jointly with the Department for Education and Skills. We have recently carried out a pilot programme which tested out how best to support those children who reach the end of key stage 2 and are not able to swim 25metres. We intend to implement this programme nationally from April 2006 and over £5 million of funding has been allocated to support the scheme in 2006–07 and 2007–08. A further £485,000 is being invested in 2005–06 with the ASA through the school to community programmes; club links and step into sport (SiS), which are aimed at sustaining participation outside school hours.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent meetings she has had regarding parental supervision of children in swimming pools; and if she will make a statement. [21472]

Mr. Caborn: In April this year, the Secretary of State convened a meeting of all interested parties to agree a package of measures aimed at resolving the issue of the blanket application of restrictive admissions policies at swimming pools. Following the meeting, officials have worked closely with the relevant organisations to deliver the agreed measures. On 8 September this year, the measures were published by my Department and implemented by relevant organisations. A copy of my Department's press statement has been placed the Libraries of both Houses. It can also be found at the following web link: www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005.

Timber

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to fund the maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber within the Department. [22127]

James Purnell: The Department has no current plans to fund the maintenance of the Central Point of Expertise on Timber.

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the refurbishment projects in her Department that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what action is being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each of these projects on ensuring that the timber used on site during refurbishment comes from legal and sustainable sources. [22129]

James Purnell: The Department plans to refurbish its main building in Cockspur Street commencing early in the next financial year. The Department has a comprehensive procurement manual which contains guidelines on purchase of timber and timber based products to ensure that they are obtained from sustainable sources. Contractors employed by the Department are required to follow these guidelines.

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department's procurement policy covers timber used on and in the construction of departmental building projects; and if she will make a statement. [22130]

James Purnell: The Department has a comprehensive procurement manual which contains guidelines on purchase of timber and timber based products to ensure that they are obtained from legal and sustainable sources. Contractors employed by the Department are also required to follow these guidelines.

Tourism

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to increase inbound tourism; and if she will make a statement. [21473]

James Purnell: My Department works actively to promote tourism both domestic and inbound. At a national level, marketing and other work to promote the sector is the responsibility of VisitBritain, which in 2004 received grant-in-aid funding of £49 million.

VisitBritain's strategy to increase the value of inbound tourism and visitor numbers includes focusing effort on those markets and segments with the greatest potential for growth. For example, investment has been targeted on countries such as China, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Russia, South Korea and Thailand.

In 2004 inbound visitor numbers grew by 12 per cent. on the previous year to reach a record 27.8 million, and spending by visitors was worth nearly £13 billion to the UK economy.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the UK's tourism deficit. [21476]

James Purnell: The UK's tourism deficit in 2004 was £17.3 billion. National tourism deficits in the developed world reflect a number of factors including rising prosperity and cheaper air flights. By way of comparison, Germany's deficit stood at £27.1 billion in 2003.

More significant is our industry's impressive performance in attracting domestic and inbound tourists, for example in 2004 inbound visitor numbers grew by 12 per cent. on the previous year to reach a record 27.8 million, and spending by visitors was worth nearly £13 billion to the UK economy.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will assess the impact of a national road pricing system on tourism; and if she will make a statement. [21520]

James Purnell: My Department will work closely with the Department for Transport to assess the impact on tourism of any future proposals for a national road pricing system. As outlined in the Government's White Paper "The Future of Transport: An Overview of Transport Policy until 2030" any decision about whether and when to implement such a scheme is likely to be some years away.

Parliamentary Questions

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance her Department follows on answering written parliamentary questions. [21084]

Mr. Lammy: I am arranging for copies of the most recent version of departmental guidance on answering written parliamentary questions to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. All guidance follows Cabinet Office guidelines.

Guidance on answering is issued to DCMS officials with each new written parliamentary question.

Additional and more detailed guidance for officials on answering written parliamentary questions is available on the DCMS Intranet.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Accession State Worker Registration Scheme

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the passport of Mr. Andrej Nagin, which was sent to his Department in connection with Mr. Nagin's application for a registration certificate under the Accession State Worker Registration Scheme, and receipt of which was confirmed in writing by the Home Office on 8 August will be returned to him. [21458]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* Mr. Andrej Nagin's passport was returned to him on 25 October 2005.

Air Weapons

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing a licensing system for air-powered weapons. [19732]

Hazel Blears: Such a scheme would place a considerable administrative burden on the police and would be disproportionate in terms of its effect on legitimate users when measured against the benefits in reducing crime. We have, however, included various measures in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which will further tighten existing controls on air weapons, including a requirement for them to be sold through registered firearms dealers. The majority of air weapons have no serial number or identification mark making them very difficult to record for the purposes of a licensing scheme.

Possession of an air weapon is not an offence and so a general amnesty as such would not be appropriate. Individual police forces can, and do, encourage people to hand in unwanted air weapons, particularly when there is a problem of misuse in their force area

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidences of violence involving the use of air weapons there were in *(a)* Houghton and Washington East and *(b)* the Northumbria police service area in the last year for which figures are available. [19733]

Hazel Blears: Northumbria police recorded 80 violent offences involving the use of air weapons in the year to March 2004. The corresponding figures for Houghton and Washington, East is not available centrally.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders were issued in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley in each of the last three years. [21159]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Gravesham; and how many have been breached. [20088]

Hazel Blears: The number of Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued, from one June 2000 to 31 December 2004 (latest available), as reported to the Home Office, where restrictions have been imposed in the local government area of Gravesham borough council, is three. Data on convictions for breach of an ASBO issued in Gravesham is not available.

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in each constituency in the UK.[20540]

Hazel Blears: The antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) statistical collection is not available at constituency level. However, from copies of ASBOs received since 1 June 2000 we are able to determine the local government authority areas in which restrictions are imposed. A table showing the breakdown by local authority area of the number of ASBOs issued in England and Wales, as notified to the Home Office, up to 31 December 2004 (latest available), is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk

Information relating to Scotland and Northern Ireland is a matter for the Scottish Executive and Northern Ireland Office respectively.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* London since 1999. [21064]

Hazel Blears: A table giving a breakdown by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within antisocial behaviour orders is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk Within Greater London data are given at London borough area level only.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the 100 antisocial behaviour response courts. [21936]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Following their establishment in summer 2004, a survey of the original 12 antisocial behaviour response courts was undertaken in autumn 2005. This survey took the form of court visits and meetings with representatives from the courts and other local agencies. The evidence gathered was used in the development of the antisocial behaviour response court model and in the production of a good practice guide.

Since the roll out of the model across England and Wales and the establishment of 154 antisocial behaviour response courts, further surveys have been undertaken. Areas have been required to complete a written self-assessment, outlining how they have implemented the framework. Interviews have been conducted with local Crown Prosecution Service representatives to provide an independent view of progress. A multi-agency conference on the courts and antisocial behaviour last week provided a further opportunity for feedback on the performance of the antisocial behaviour response courts.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the costs of the antisocial behaviour response courts have been, broken down by *(a)* court and *(b)* month since their inception. [21935]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

With support from staff working at the headquarters of Her Majesty's Courts Service, it has been possible to establish the antisocial behaviour response courts on a costs neutral basis.

Antisocial behaviour response courts take existing case loads and process them in accordance with six core principles: close inter-agency working; swift and effective case management; specialist sessions, where appropriate; targeted training for magistrates; awareness of local issues and concerns; and high level witness care. To support this, each area has an antisocial behaviour champion, who undertakes this role alongside existing responsibilities.

Within the framework outlined above, it is a matter for local management to decide how best to utilise existing resources in order to meet local needs.

Communication Data

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the option for a clearing house model is being considered in respect of the Acquisition and Disclosure of Communication Data Draft Code of Practice; whether such a model will be included in the revised draft; and if he will make a statement. [15780]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In pre-consultation on the revised draft Code of Practice for the acquisition and disclosure of communications data, under Chapter II of Part I of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, representations have been made to the Home Office by a commercial clearing house service that the revised draft Code of Practice should include an explicit reference that such a service may be used by public authorities. Those representations are being considered.

Community Support Officers

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers community support officers have; and what representations he has on increasing their powers. [20437]

Hazel Blears: A list of powers that can be designated to community support officers (CSOs) is available on the Home Office website at:

http://www.police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/community-support-officers/

Presently the powers designated to CSOs vary from force to force and we are currently consulting with stakeholders on whether to establish a set of standard powers that all CSOs would have. The consultation paper can be found on the Home Office website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/haveyoursay/current-consultations/

Counter-terrorism

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on EU co-operation on counter-terrorism. [17448]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government believe that the European Union has an important role to play in the fight against terrorism. While the prime responsibility for protection of citizens remains a national one, effective co-operation by EU member states, supported by appropriate EU bodies, is a key part of our response to this threat.

Following the attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004, the EU drafted an Action Plan to combat terrorism. This contained a list of measures for implementation at both an EU and national level. In the wake of the London bombings the 13 July Extraordinary JHA Council committed to accelerate delivery of outstanding proposals in the plan. This is a priority for the current UK presidency and we are on course to achieve a great deal. However, there is still much to do and the current Action Plan is due for replacement by the end of December.

We aim to deliver a revised and refreshed plan, together with a strategic framework that would give a greater sense of direction to EU counter-terrorism co-operation. The EU will continue to build on current achievements to maximise the effectiveness of its efforts.

Crime

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes were committed on London Underground in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available, broken down by offence. [20115]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on crime on the London Underground are not collected by the Home Office.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* levels of and *(b)* detection rates for (i) violent crime, (ii) car crime, (iii) sexual crime, (iv) burglary and (v) robbery were in the Ribble Valley constituency in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [21160]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the number of offences recorded for Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), and is given in the following table. The introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in May 2004 resulted in substantial changes to the sexual offences. In particular, the redefining of the offences of exposure into the sexual offences group resulted in substantial increases in this category nationally. Statistics on detections for Ribble Valley are not available.

Recorded crimes in the Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership: 2004–05

Offers type	*Number of offences*
Violence against the person	424
Sexual offences[1]	32
Robbery	5
Violent crime:	461
Domestic burglary	139
Theft of a motor vehicle	54
Theft from a vehicle	171
Vehicle crime:	225

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the rates for *(a)* mugging, *(b)* violent crime and *(c)* burglary in each ward in the Waverley borough council area in each of the last five years. [20842]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the crime detection rate for offences of *(a)* violence against the person, *(b)* sexual offences, *(c)* robberies, *(d)* burglaries and *(e)* theft of a vehicle was in the constituency of Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland. [18707]

Hazel Blears: Detection rates are recorded at basic command unit (BCU) level. Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland comes within the Middlesbrough BCU and the detection rates for the crimes requested are given in the table.

Detection rates in the Middlesbrough basic command unit (BCU) for 2004–05

Offence type	*Detection rate (percentage)*
Violence against the person	44
Sexual offences[1]	59
Robbery	16
Domestic burglary	12
Theft of a motor vehicle	9

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 20 wards with the *(a)* highest and *(b)* lowest crime rates for (i) mugging, (ii) violent crime and (iii) burglary. [20845]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Drunkenness (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made for drunk and disorderly behaviour in Kent in each year since 1997. [20085]

Hazel Blears: The information requested on arrests is not collected centrally.

Encounter Receipts Pilot Schemes

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police authorities are operating pilot schemes of encounter receipts. [910]

Hazel Blears: We are not aware of any police authorities operating pilot schemes of encounter receipts.

Firearms Certificates

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken was by each police force to process applications for firearms certificates to police firearms licensing departments in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by police authority area. [21289]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21303]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Performance during 2004–05 was reported in my Department's Annual Report (Cm 6528); my Department's Autumn Performance Report will also describe performance against the value for money target.

Historical Sex Abuse Cases

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who is responsible for the training of police officers in historical sex abuse cases. [20184]

Hazel Blears: The responsibility for the training of police officers in the investigation of historical child and adult sexual abuse cases is currently held by individual police forces. However there are a number of national programmes currently being developed by the National Centre for Policing Excellence, which is a business unit of Centrex, who are the main police training provider.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reforms have been made in response to the Home Affairs Committee's Report on historical sex abuse investigations in 2002. [20185]

Hazel Blears: Since 2002, guidance has been issued for the police on appropriate techniques for investigating allegations of historical child abuse. This is included in the "Senior Investigating Officer's Handbook—the Investigation of Historical/Institutional Child Abuse" produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers. This handbook is now being revised and we anticipate that a new draft will be presented to the Association of Chief Police Officers for their comments in April 2006.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued on the appropriate measures to be taken by agencies involved in historical sex abuse investigations to minimise the potential disruption to the alleged offender's private and professional life. [20199]

Hazel Blears: There is no guidance to the effect stated but I am confident that police officers involved in historic sex abuse investigations treat suspects with sensitivity and do whatever is reasonable to minimise the disruption to the suspect's private and professional life. Those who are unhappy with the way they have been treated by the police have an avenue of complaint through the Chief Constable and the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Hizb ut-Tahrir

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the activities of Hizb ut-Tahir in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [20731]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The activities of Hizb ut-Tahir and other extremist groups are kept under regular review. We will take action against them where it is appropriate.

Hunting Act

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* arrested and *(b)* prosecuted, where all proceedings are complete, under the Hunting Act 2004. [20587]

Hazel Blears: The Hunting Act 2004 came into force on 1 February 2005. The summary offences introduced under the Act are non-notifiable and as a result are not covered by the Home Office statistical collection on arrests for notifiable (recorded crime) offences. Statistics on the number of people prosecuted during 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Immigration

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will *(a)* publish the results from and *(b)* respond to the consultation on immigration rules as they relate to ministers of religion which closed on 31 May. [18881]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The consultation that closed on 31 May raised issues that prompted a second round of meetings with faith communities and a second phase of consultation that ended on 8 July. We have been collating and considering the responses to the consultation over the summer and we hope to make announcements shortly about the way ahead.

Institutional Abuse Investigations

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police investigations into institutional abuse have taken place since 1995; when each *(a)* commenced and *(b)* concluded; how many people have been arrested as a result of such investigations; how many complainants have been involved; how many cases have been forwarded to the Crown Prosecution Service; in how many cases charges have been brought; and what the result has been in each case where all proceedings have been completed. [19950]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not held centrally by the Home Office and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information provided

previously to the Home Affairs Select Committee was supplied by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

National Alcohol Strategy

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding is available to implement the Government's National Alcohol Strategy. [16850]

Hazel Blears: The Government has significant funding, across several Government Departments, with specific projects in support of the National Alcohol Strategy. For example, the Home Office has funded Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns and the Tackling Violent Crime Programme, the Department of Health has funded an audit of treatment services and a Programme of Improvements will be supported from April. Both Departments are jointly funding the promotion of sensible drinking.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England encourages the police, local authorities, primary care trusts and other groups to better utilise existing resources and powers and to encourage agencies to work together more effectively to combat alcohol harms.

National Firearms Register

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 909W, on the National Firearms Register, what progress has been made on testing the National Firearms Licensing Management System; what target date has been set for it to be available for forces to take up; and if he will make a statement. [21693]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The live (Beta) pilot of the National Firearms Licensing Management System has been rescheduled to commence on Monday 14 November 2005 for the Metropolitan police and on Monday 21 November 2005 for the Lancashire police. Both the Home Office and the Police Information Technology Organisation who are taking the project forward are committed to commencing roll-out to all forces in the new year.

Neighbourhood Watches (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to encourage the formation of neighbourhood watches in local communities in Kent. [20083]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office recognises the valuable contribution that neighbourhood watch and other watch volunteers make in the fight against crime. We encourage the formation of neighbourhood watch schemes throughout England and Wales by providing advice on how to set up and maintain a scheme and how to obtain funding. We also provide a free training package for neighbourhood watch co-ordinators and other advice and support as required, such as this year's national conference and officials' attendance at other conferences where possible.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the question of 7 June, from the hon. Member for Eddisbury, on the number of designated education hours lost in the Prison Service due to staff shortages. [11102]

Fiona Mactaggart: I replied to the hon. Member on 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, volume 436, column 542W.

Persistent Offenders

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is for tackling persistent and prolific offenders. [19789]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* The prolific and other priority offenders (PPO) strategy is at the heart of the Government's efforts to reduce crime and disorder. This strategy, which was launched by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister in March 2004, targets not only existing prolific offenders but also those young people who are on the cusp of a prolific offending lifestyle. The strategy has three strands: prevent and deter—to stop young people becoming prolific offenders; catch and convict—tackling those who are already prolific offenders; and rehabilitate and resettle—working to increase the number of offenders who stop offending by offering a range of supportive interventions.

This multi-agency approach to offender management built on, and replaced, the previous persistent offender scheme. Since September 2004 PPO schemes have been established in each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area in England and each Community Safety Partnership in Wales. These schemes allow local partners, such as the police, prisons, probation and the local authority to concentrate their joint efforts on monitoring and rehabilitating the relatively small number of people who have been identified locally as causing most harm to their communities.

Over 10,000 existing prolific offenders have been identified by schemes across England and Wales. In addition, about 4,000 young people are likely to be identified as suitable for support as part of the prevent and deter strand. An initial impact evaluation for the strategy is currently underway. Guidance for all three strands, as well as monthly performance management framework reports, can be found on the website http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/ppominisite01.htm.

Police

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been recruited in North Kent in each year since 1997. [20087]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Home Office. The breakdown of the number of recruitments into Kent police as a whole is available, and provided in the table.

Police officer recruitment in Kent police

As at 31 March	*Full-time equivalent*
2005	225
2004	326
2003	370

Police officer recruitment in Kent police

As at 31 March	*Full-time equivalent*
2002	286
2001	269
2000	174
1999	120
1998	119
1997	295

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will expand the strength of the Merseyside police force. [20261]

Hazel Blears: The number of police officers and staff deployed by the Merseyside police is a matter for the chief constable and the police authority to determine, subject to the budget set by the authority.

At the end of March 2005 Merseyside police had 4,317 police officers, an increase of 195 since March 2004. The force also employed 2,114 police staff at the end of March 2005. At the end of June 2005 there were 164 community support officers. This is expected to increase to 191 by the end of March 2006.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to ensure, following the merger of police forces, that two seats on the new police authority will be provided for every top tier local authority within the area covered, to enable a majority party and an opposition party councillor to be appointed. [18765]

Hazel Blears: Following the recent publication of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's report on police force structures, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked police authorities and chief constables to submit to him proposals for restructuring by 23 December. We will make a further announcement on the way forward, including the issue of any consequential changes to the membership of police authorities, once we have considered these proposals.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police vehicles in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* Essex were (i) purchased and (ii) hired in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [20632]

Hazel Blears: The information is not held centrally. The chief constable is responsible for the day to day operational management of the force. I am therefore sending a copy of this parliamentary question to the chief constable, so that he can respond to the question and copy his reply to me.

Racial Attacks (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many racially motivated attacks there have been in Gravesham in each year since 1997. [20086]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to recorded offences of racially or religiously aggravated common assault and less serious wounding. The statistics relate to the Gravesham crime and disorder reduction partnership area and are given in the tables. In the recorded crime series it is not possible to separately identify those offences which are racially or religiously aggravated. This is because at the time of recording it may not be possible for the police to determine whether the offence has a racial or religious motivation.

Table 1: Recorded offences of racially or religiously aggravated assault in the Gravesham crime and disorder reduction partnership area—2000–01 and 2001–02

Number of offences

Offence	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Racially or religiously aggravated less serious wounding	5	10
Racially or religiously aggravated common assault	8	11

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Recorded offences of racially or religiously aggravated assault in the Gravesham crime and disorder reduction partnership area—2002–03 to 2004–05

Number of offences

Offence	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Racially or religiously aggravated less serious wounding	8	8	17
Racially or religiously aggravated common assault	8	7	8

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Road Traffic Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of section 15A of the Road Traffic 1988. [20100]

Paul Goggins: This section of the Road Traffic Act governs the provision of safety equipment for children in motor vehicles. We believe it serves a useful road safety purpose. Its enforcement is a matter for the police. Chief officers of police are best placed to decide on its level of priority in the light of its perceived importance, conflicting demands on police time and resources, and local circumstances.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of section 41A of the Road Traffic Act 1988. [20113]

Paul Goggins: Section 41A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended makes it an offence for a person not to comply with certain construction and use requirements, to use on a road a motor vehicle or trailer which does not comply with such requirements, or to cause or permit a motor vehicle or trailer to be so used. We believe the offences serve a useful road safety purpose. Their enforcement is a matter for the police, who periodically conduct roadside checks to detect those committing them. Chief officers of police are best placed to decide on

the level of priority that should be given to these offences in the light of their perceived seriousness, conflicting demands on police time and resources, and local circumstances.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of sections 22 and 22A of the Road Traffic Act 1988. [20114]

Hazel Blears: These provisions make it an offence to leave a vehicle in a dangerous position and to cause danger to other road users. Their enforcement is a matter for the police. Chief officers of police are best placed to decide on the level of priority that should be given to these offences in the light of their perceived seriousness, conflicting demands on police time and resources, and local circumstances

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* section 16, *(b)* section 27 and *(c)* sections 28 and 29 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. [20116]

Hazel Blears: These provisions govern the wearing of protective headgear by motorcyclists, the keeping of dogs on a lead on designated roads and dangerous, careless and inconsiderate cycling. We believe the offences they create serve a useful road safety purpose. Their enforcement is a matter for the police. Chief officers of police are best placed to decide on the level of priority that should be given to these offences in the light of their perceived seriousness, conflicting demands on police time and resources, and local circumstances.

School of Economic Science

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the operation of religious cults, with particular reference to the School of Economic Science. [19842]

Paul Goggins: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary recently met with the Head of INFORM (Information Network Focusing on Religious Movement) to discuss a range of issues related to cults in the UK. My right hon. Friend regards this as a serious issue and will keep the situation under review. We have not had any recent representations from the School of Economic Science, but we do share the concerns many people have on the activity of cults.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people were admitted to secure training centres for breaking antisocial behaviour orders in each of the last six months. [16919]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) breach data are currently available for period 1 June to 31 December 2003. The number of persons aged 10 to 17 who breached their ASBO (on one or more occasions) during this period is 392. Of these 392 individuals, 179 received a custodial sentence of which 30 went to custody for breach of an ASBO alone.

We do not hold figures on individuals who having breached their orders, who were admitted to secure training centres in the last six months.

Sex Abuse (Gradual Disclosure)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has evaluated on gradual disclosure of sex abuse; and if he will make a statement. [20174]

Hazel Blears: Matters relating to disclosure, and other investigative techniques, are an operational matter for the police. Any research on the gradual disclosure of sex abuse will inform the Association of Chief Police Officers' current consideration of the handbook for senior investigating officers which is currently being revised.

Stolen Artworks

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces in England and Wales maintain a website displaying art and artefacts stolen in their area. [20545]

Hazel Blears: We are only aware of one police force who maintain a specific website on arts and antiques—the Metropolitan Police Service. However, others do list details of stolen items on their websites, either routinely or during a particular appeal, and the items listed sometimes include arts or antiques. We do not, however, maintain a list of forces who may or may not have done this.

Under-age Offenders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children under the age of 10 years would have been charged in the last 12 months if they had been over the age of criminality when they committed their misdemeanour. [21032]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Victims Fund

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been disbursed by the Victims Fund in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the London borough of Croydon (i) in total and (ii) per head of population. [17572]

Fiona Mactaggart: £4 million additional funding over two years has been placed in the Victims Fund to support the development of services for victims of sexual offending in England and Wales. Of the 47 organisations that were awarded grant funding in the 2004–05 financial year, one organisation was based in Croydon. That organisation received £27,080. The same organisation was one of 61 organisations that successfully applied for funding in the 2005–06 financial year and was awarded an individual grant of £40,000.

The amount of funding in total and per head of population in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Croydon, based on census 2001 data for those areas is shown in the table:

	England and Wales	Croydon
Total population[1]	52,041,916	330,587
Grant funding 2004–06 (£)	4 million	87,080
Total (£) per head[3]	7.69	26.34

[1] The population figures are taken from the 2001 census.
[2] Scheme total.
[3] Figures for the amount of funding per head of population in Croydon/England and Wales have been calculated using available awarded funding between the 2004–05 and 2005–06 financial years and population data from the 2001 census.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Burial Records

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what guidance and regulations apply to the recording of burial details in church and chapel grounds; [21403]

(2) whether the guidance and regulations on the accurate record keeping of burials differs for local authority-maintained burial sites and church sites; [21404]

(3) whether there is a duty on churches and chapels accurately to record the names of persons buried in individual plots in church grounds. [21405]

Ms Harman: The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, as amended, prescribes the registration of burials in local authority cemeteries in England and Wales. Outside such cemeteries, the registration of burials according to the rites of the Church of England is prescribed by the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 while burials conducted by the Church in Wales are governed by the Welsh Church (Burial Grounds) Act 1945. The registration of other burials outside local authority cemeteries is prescribed by the Registration of Burials Act 1864. The registration process is not subject to Government guidance, but accuracy of record-keeping is implicit.

Commercial Court

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Government intends to publish its *(a)* analysis of the potential risk of losing commercial court business to further jurisdictions and *(b)* business case for the renovation of the commercial court. [20461]

Ms Harman: To disclose the outline business case at this point in time could prejudice the Department's commercial interests.

Coroner System

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on progress on reform of the coroner system. [21462]

Ms Harman: I am currently concluding consideration of the nature and extent of reform of the coroner system, and will make a statement as soon as possible on how the Government intend to proceed.

Court Buildings (Disabled Access)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what percentage of court buildings are *(a)* fully and *(b)* partially accessible to disabled people who are (i) judges, (ii) court staff, (iii) members of the legal profession and (iv) members of the public; and if she will make a statement. [20645]

Ms Harman: The majority of Crown and county courts are now believed to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act as regards accessibility for all users. There has been some slippage with regard to works required at a small number of locations, and this is currently being addressed.

Following on from the transfer of the Magistrates Courts Estate to HMCS on 1 April 2005, an assessment is being made of the compliance of magistrates courts with the Act and a programme will be established to remedy any shortfall..

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to her Department. [21009]

Bridget Prentice: There is no formal requirement for all new recruits to be assessed in literacy and numerical skills in my Department. However, certain posts in the magistrates courts and at Executive Grade and above may involve such tests for posts in a policy area, communications or Information Technology posts.

General recruitment asks for administration experience or the relevant qualifications (i.e. five GCSE's or equivalent at grade C or above including English language) for admin grades or 2 A levels (and English language GCSE) for executive grades.

My Department uses competence and job specification based recruitment which assesses candidates against the criteria in both the application form and at interview.

In our Department, all appointees to the Senior Civil Service attend a full day assessment centre during which they undertake a two-hour written exercise. In this exercise, candidates are given a mixture of word-based evidence and numerical data to analyse and evaluate, and are assessed in relation to their ability to build a constructive argument from the data provided.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of her Department. [21108]

Bridget Prentice: Testing for literacy and numeracy is available for all staff on demand through the "Skills for Life" initiative and is widely advertised during our annual Learning At Work Weeks. Staff can undertake written or computerised tests.

My Department has undertaken to fund any training identified to improve individual members of staffs literacy and/or numeracy levels resulting from the tests and has worked with local colleges and Union Learning Representatives to address those needs.

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will bring forward legislation to allow electoral registration officers to consult central Government databases in order to maximise registration. [20942]

Ms Harman: We are currently considering whether the sources of data available to electoral registration officers (EROs) should be broadened, taking into account any data protection implications, to help EROs carry out their duties. Under the Representation of the People Regulations 2001, EROs have access to the records of the local authority that appointed them and the registrar of births, marriages and deaths for the purpose of their registration duties.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how much was raised from each local authority from the sale of electoral registers in each of the past 10 years, listed in descending order according to the greatest cumulative total; [21739]

(2) how many electoral registration staff in each local authority area have a recognised national certificate or diploma; and what plans she has to encourage electoral registration staff to study for qualification; [21740]

(3) if she will list the local authorities that *(a)* do and *(b)* do not (i) design their own form A, (ii) use personal canvassers to produce electoral registers, (iii) carry out training sessions for new canvassers, (iv) split canvas areas into smaller areas, (v) use electoral registration calling cards if a householder is out when a canvasser visits, (vi) have payment by result systems for canvassers, (vii) use the telephone to contact non-responding households, (viii) send an enforcement letter at the end of the registration period, (ix) prosecute non-responders, (x) liaise with (A) council tax and (B) housing departments, (xi) work in consortia of other local authorities to increase registration and (xii) use anonymous registration; [21744]

(4) if she will list local authorities that *(a)* do and *(b)* do not give turnout targets for their electoral registration departments as part of their corporate policy goals; [21745]

(5) if she will list the local authorities that *(a)* use and *(b)* do not use doorstep canvassers to compile their electoral registers; [21746]

(6) what the mean number of days before an election has been that *(a)* polling cards and *(b)* postal ballots were received by electors in each (i) local election and (ii) general election since 1997; [21748]

(7) if she will list local authorities that use temporary staff for electoral registration purposes; [21751]

(8) how much was spent per election on electoral registration in each local authority in the last year for which figures are available; [21762]

(9) which electoral registration officers *(a)* use and *(b)* do not use local government databases when drawing up electoral registers. [21763]

Ms Harman: Electoral services are delivered by local electoral registration officers and returning officers. The information sought is held by individual local authorities, and is not collected by central Government.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the level of available funding on an electoral registration officer's ability to produce an accurate register; [21741]

(2) whether electoral registration officers may request additional resources from their local authority to carry out a house-to-house or other inquiry to produce an accurate register of electors. [21742]

Ms Harman: Electoral registration officers are funded by the local authority that appointed them and decisions on funding for electoral registration are for local authorities. The performance standards provisions in the Electoral Administration Bill will help to ensure that there is greater transparency in the information that is available about the funding of electoral registration.

The Electoral Administration Bill includes a new duty on electoral registration officers to take all necessary steps to ensure comprehensive registers. Those steps include the following specific measures:

(a) Sending the canvass form more than once to any address;

(b) Making house to house inquires on more than one occasion;

(c) Making contact by such other means as the registration officer thinks appropriate with persons who do not have an entry in a register;

(d) Inspecting any records held by any person which the registration officer is permitted to inspect; and

(e) Providing training to others carrying out the duty.

As with all of the measures in the Electoral Administration Bill, we will be providing local authorities with additional funding to ensure that electoral registration officers have the necessary resources to carry out their new duty.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent on central Government advertising on *(a)* registration and *(b)* encouraging people to vote in each of the past 10 years. [21743]

Ms Harman: Since 2001, the Electoral Commission has been responsible for promoting public awareness of current electoral systems and encouraging people to participate in elections. The information sought in relation to central Government prior to 2001 is not available.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent on publicising *(a)* local and *(b)* general elections in each local authority area (i) in total and (ii) per head of population in each election since 1997. [21747]

Ms Harman: The information is not collected by central Government. Since 2001, the Electoral Commission has been responsible for promoting public awareness of current electoral systems and systems of local and national Government.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures her Department has taken to encourage electoral registration officers to cross-reference local government databases to enhance electoral registers. [21750]

Ms Harman: Guidance to electoral registration officers is issued by the Electoral Commission. The Commission issued guidance on use of other council records by electoral registration officers in their circular number 19 of 2005.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many electors in each constituency in the UK have dual registration on electoral registers; and what measures are in place to prevent double voting. [21758]

Ms Harman: It is possible for certain categories of electors who spend their time equally between two addresses to be lawfully registered at more than one address. Information is not collected on the number of such persons registered. It is an offence for any person to vote more than once in a general election. Individual Returning Officers are responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted in accordance with the requirements of electoral law. The presiding officer at a polling station, acting under the direction of the Returning Officer, may ask a person applying for a ballot paper if they have already voted at the election, if it is suspected that the voter is attempting to vote more than once at the election. A ballot paper shall not be given to any person required to answer the above question unless they have answered it satisfactorily.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the guidelines the Home Office issued to electoral registration officers on house visits for electors who failed to register. [21759]

Ms Harman: The Home Office ceased to have any responsibility for electoral matters in June 2001. Guidance to electoral registration officers is now issued by the independent Electoral Commission. The Commission's most recent guidance on administering the annual canvass of electors was published in their circular number 16 of 2005. The Electoral Administration Bill, introduced on 11 October, includes a new duty on electoral registration officers to take all necessary steps to ensure comprehensive registers. Those steps include the following specific measures:

(a) Sending the canvass form more than once to any address;

(b) Making house to house inquires on more than one occasion;

(c) Making contact by such other means as the registration officer thinks appropriate with persons who do not have an entry in a register.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to standardise electoral registration forms. [21760]

Ms Harman: Section 10(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 provides that the form electoral registration officers must use for the annual canvass is to be that provided in regulations, or a form to the same effect. In England and Wales, the current form is prescribed in the Representation of the People (Form of Canvass) (England and Wales) Regulations 2004.

There is no prescribed form in relation to applications for registration outside of the annual canvass, but such 'rolling registration' applications must provide the information set out in regulation 26 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001.

My Department is currently undertaking a project to evaluate the extent to which an improved prescribed canvass form might make the registration process simpler for electors, and whether other electoral forms might also benefit from greater standardisation. Any regulations arising from this project are likely to be made during 2006.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidelines have been issued on follow-up procedures to be used by electoral registration officers for individuals who have failed to register; whether she plans to reform these guidelines; and if she will introduce a duty on local authority canvassers to visit electors who fail to register. [21761]

Ms Harman: Guidance to electoral registration officers is issued by the independent Electoral Commission. The Commission's most recent guidance on administering the annual canvass of electors was published in their circular number 16 of 2005. The Electoral Administration Bill, introduced on 11 October, includes a new duty on electoral registration officers to take all necessary steps to ensure comprehensive registers. Those steps include the following specific measures:

(a) Sending the canvass form more than once to any address;

(b) Making house to house inquires on more than one occasion;

(c) Making contact by such other means as the registration officer thinks appropriate with persons who do not have an entry in a register.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she expects the boundary commission to take account of the number of non-registered voters when redrawing new constituency boundaries. [21768]

Ms Harman: In accordance with the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, the boundary commissions for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland base their recommendations on the number of electors on the register in force on the date that the review is announced.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment the Department has made of the main reasons for non-registration of voters. [21769]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission's recent report, "Understanding Electoral Registration: the extent and nature of non-registration in Britain"

examines these issues in some depth. The research identified that the majority of non-registrants in 2000 came from three groups; those living with their parents (particularly attainers), people who have moved within the six months prior to the qualifying date, and people renting from a private landlord. The research highlighted the importance of people's individual and household situation and attitudes towards politics and voting. There was also a link between the presence and actions of the head of the household and non-registration.

EU Document COM (2005) 172

Mr. Cash: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on the European Commission document COM (2005) 172. [19635]

Bridget Prentice: My colleague Baroness Ashton of Upholland submitted an explanatory memorandum on 14 July 2005 that sets out the Government position.

House of Lords

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to bring forward legislation to change the powers of the House of Lords; and if she will make a statement. [21994]

Ms Harman: The Government intend to continue with the reform of the House of Lords to create an effective legitimate Chamber while maintaining the primacy of the House of Commons, as set out in its manifesto.

The Government are seeking the co-operation of other parties in setting up a Joint Committee of both Houses to review the conventions of the Lords and developing alternative forms of scrutiny. The Government are committed to seek to legislate to place reasonable limits on the time Bills spend in the second Chamber so they cannot become bogged down in procedural stratagems.

Immigration/Asylum

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list lawyers in England and Wales who carry out pro bono immigration and asylum legal aid work. [22478]

Bridget Prentice: Details of all solicitors across England and Wales that provide publicly funded legal services for asylum and immigration matters and meet the Community Legal Services quality standard are available through the Community Legal Service Direct website at www.clsdirect.org.uk. The website also lists all advice agencies and information providers that meet this standard.

Legal Aid

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs by how much funding for criminal legal aid has changed in the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [21518]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Gentleman for Hemel Hempstead to the answer I gave, on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 894W to the hon. Gentleman for Kettering, (Mr. Hollobone).

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of solicitors' firms who were offered civil legal aid contracts refused them in each of the last five years, broken down by county; and if she will make a statement. [21992]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission do not keep records of firms which refuse offers of a contract, only the changes in numbers for each year.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what allocation has been made for the funding of legal aid in criminal cases in each of the next five years. [20427]

Bridget Prentice: There is no specific allocation of funding for criminal legal aid for the next five years. Funding for the Criminal Defence Service forms part of the total funding available for all legal aid (excluding asylum, which is part of the single asylum fund). The resource budget for legal aid is set for three years at each Spending Review and these stand at £1,825 million, £1,872 million and, £1,920 million for years 2005–06 to 2007–08 respectively.

Postal Voting

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidelines her Department has given to electoral registration offices on the timing of the despatch of postal ballots; and whether she plans to change this advice. [21749]

Ms Harman: Guidance to electoral administrators is issued by the Electoral Commission. The Commission issued a comprehensive set of guidance materials at the most recent general election which included advice on the despatch of postal ballot papers.

Residential Homes (Abuse)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much in public funds has been spent in funding civil actions arising out of abuse in care homes and residential schools since 1995. [20202]

Bridget Prentice: Child abuse certificates are not identified separately in the Legal Services Commission's computerised records. The Commission can provide figures calculated from its records of specific, identified group actions only, where a number of parties wish to bring very similar actions against a single person. The cost of stand-alone, individual cases cannot be calculated.

Net expenditure on identified group actions related to child abuse for the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05 were as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	1.4
2001–02	1.9
2002–03	1.5
2003–04	0.5
2004–05	[1]-1.0

[1] net recovery of costs

The Commission is not able to provide comprehensive information prior to 2000.

Travellers' Hotline

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on legal advice hotlines for Travellers. [21987]

Bridget Prentice: The Community Law Partnership, a legal practice based in Birmingham provides the only publicly funded telephone advice line specifically focused on Travellers. For details of the scope and funding of this service, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2249W to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman).

Voter Registration

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what is her policy on using national insurance numbers in relation to voter registration; and if she will make a statement. [21984]

Ms Harman: The Government currently has no plans to implement the collection of national insurance numbers in voter registration outside of Northern Ireland. This is in line with recommendations made by the Electoral Commission and in the joint Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee report, "Electoral Registration".

The Electoral Administration Bill, currently before Parliament, provides for the piloting and possible subsequent national rollout of the collection of 'personal identifiers' at the point at which a person registers to vote. These identifiers are specified at clause 14 as a signature, date of birth and such other information relating to an individual as is prescribed. Although this power to prescribe further identifiers is wide enough to provide for the collection of national insurance numbers, the Government does not intend to move forward in this way.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 28 October 2005

TREASURY

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from members of the public. [21910]

John Healey: HM Treasury aims to reply to correspondence from the public within 15 working days of receipt. Against that target, performance has improved from 36 per cent. in 1999–2000 to 79 per cent. in 2004–05. This has been achieved through a mix of improving IT support, management information and more robust targeting and monitoring. Systems and processes are continuously under review to identify areas for further improvements.

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21911]

John Healey: HM Treasury aims to reply to hon. Members' correspondence within 15 working days of receipt. Against that target, performance has improved from 47 per cent. in 1999–2000 to 86 per cent. in 2004–05. This has been achieved through a mix of improving IT support, management information and more robust targeting and monitoring. Systems and processes are continuously under review to identify areas for further improvements.

Environmental Taxes

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to evaluate the effectiveness of environmental taxes to inform further policy development on the Government's sustainable development strategy, with particular reference to climate change. [22030]

John Healey: Chapter 7 of Budget 2005, "Investing for our future: Fairness and opportunity for Britain's hard-working families", HC 372 contained assessments of all the main environmental taxes. The Government also published at Budget 2005 an independent evaluation of the Climate Change levy (CCL), "Modelling the initial effects of the climate change levy", by Cambridge Econometrics at Budget 2005 which is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk The Climate Change Programme Review, launched by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in September 2004 is looking at Government policies more widely to tackle climate change and aims to report by the end of the year.

London Underground

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he plans to meet the Mayor of London to discuss the renegotiation of the public-private partnership deal for the London underground; and if he will make a statement. [21866]

John Healey: This is a matter for the Department of Transport. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport made a statement last week.

Railways (Employment)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed in the rail sector in each Government region; and if he will make a statement. [21867]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Lynne Featherstone, dated 28 October 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment in the rail sector. (21867)

The attached table contains information from the Annual Business Inquiry on the number of employee jobs in the rail sector in each Government office region in 2003, the latest year for which information is available. The figures for the North East region have been combined with those for Yorkshire and the Humber in order to avoid the potential disclosure of information supplied under the Statistics of Trade Act.

The rail sector has been defined to include Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes 35.20 (manufacture of railway and tramway locomotives and rolling stock) and 60.10 (transport via railways). Other rail sector employee jobs, for example those in maintenance and repair of rolling stock, transportation via metro systems and passenger terminal activities are excluded as they cannot be identified separately from jobs in other sectors.

Employee jobs in the rail sector[1] in each Government Office Region: 2003

	Number
North West	3,800
North East and Yorkshire and the Humber[2]	10,100
East Midlands	5,100
West Midlands	9,400
Eastern	2,400
London	13,500
South East	6,500
South West	3,900
Wales	1,800
Scotland	4,400
Great Britain	60,900

[1] Rail sector defined as SIC codes 35.20 and 60.10.

[2] This region is formed by combining figures for the North East and those for Yorkshire and the Humber to avoid publishing disclosive data.

Source:
Annual Business Inquiry (2003).

Sustainable Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of *(a)* new building work and *(b)* refurbishment of buildings of (i) his Department

and (ii) agencies of his Department has since May 1997 been subject to environmental assessment using BREEAM and BREEAM98. [21996]

John Healey: The HM Treasury building at 1 Horse Guards Road, London was assessed as "excellent" under BREEAM 98. The HM Revenue and Customs refurbishment of 100 Parliament Street was rated as "very good" under BREEAM 2003. The Office of Government Commerce have BREAAM assessments at "good" or above in place for 67 per cent. of their estate.

HM Revenue and Customs do not hold information in the format and covering the time scales requested. Their STEPS PFI contract, which covers the majority of the HMRC estate, includes a requirement that all alternative facilities or refurbishments over £250,000 achieve a "very good" or "excellent" BREEAM rating.

BREEAM assessments are not held for the Debt Management Office the Government Actuary's Department, Royal Mint or the Office for National Statistics.

Tax Avoidance Schemes

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will undertake investigations into tax avoidance schemes by British arms of accountancy houses which have admitted unlawful conduct in the creation or selling of such schemes in the United States. [22270]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer to him of 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 436W, concerning promoters of tax avoidance schemes.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what proportion of those receiving child care tax credit have had an overpayment in each month since its introduction; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the recovery of overpayments on those receiving child care tax credit. [18868]

Dawn Primarolo: Monthly overpayment figures are not available as information on the number of tax credit awards with overpayments is available only after family incomes and circumstances have been finalised.

Mike Wood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance he has issued to HM Revenue and Customs in relation to dealing with tax credit overpayments since the Paymaster General's statement to the House on 22 June. [19675]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Mudie), on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column's 368–69W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update table 1 on cost of collection (pence per pound collected) from appendix 1, page 150 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2004 to include the latest data for tax credits for 2004–05. [22419]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 949W.

A figure for total tax credits payments made in the financial year 2004–05 can be found in Note 3 to the Trust Statement in the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–05.

The Annual Report for HM Revenue and Customs 2004–05 will be published later this year and include an updated cost of collection table for the Inland Revenue showing the 2004–05 figures.

WALES

Departmental Electricity

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the annual spending by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies on electricity use has been in each year since 1997. [18138]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. Electricity bills for its premises were paid by the National Assembly for Wales until 2000. Payments made by the Wales Office since are:

Financial year	*£*
2000–01	9,043.42
2001–02	12,334.52
2002–03	14,440.37
2003–04	9,180.72
2004–05	4,368.05

Note:
Figures for financial year 2005–06 will be available in April 2006

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23467]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office expenditure for items of art in 2004–05 was nil.

EU Directives

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Welsh First Minister and *(b)* other Ministers in the Welsh Assembly Government concerning the implementation in Wales of European Commission Directives covering (i) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and (ii) the setting of standards for efficient energy use. [18269]

Nick Ainger: My right hon. Friend and I have regular meetings with Assembly Ministers on a variety of matters, including measures to promote energy efficiency. EU Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings will be implemented through revisions to Building Regulations; this is not a devolved matter. ODPM announced on 13 September changes to Parts F and L of the Building Regulations to implement this Directive from April 2006 in England and Wales. The

Assembly is represented on the Building Regulations Advisory Committee and is therefore aware of on-going developments.

Herceptin

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects Herceptin to be available to patients in Wales for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. [19905]

Nick Ainger: All women in Wales diagnosed with breast cancer can already be tested to see if they might benefit from Herceptin.

Herceptin is currently available in England and Wales for patients in the later stages of breast cancer. It is also available for some patients in the early stages of breast cancer, though only in exceptional circumstances.

The Secretary of State for Health has already asked the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to begin their preparatory work on Herceptin so they will be in a position to produce guidance quickly when the drug is licensed.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17885]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office recognises the benefits of volunteering both to the individual and the organisation. Wales Office staff are able to take one day's special leave a year to take part in voluntary and community activities.

The Wales Office considers requests from individuals who wish to volunteer within the Department. The Department does not hold information on the number of volunteering positions offered in each of the last five years. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Farm Business Advice Service

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers have used the farm business advice service, broken down by region. [22178]

Jim Knight: The original three day farm business advice service was launched in October 2000 and ended on 31 March 2005.

The original service was delivered to 17,676 farmers, broken down on a regional basis as follows:

	Number
North West	2,720
North East	733
Yorkshire and Number	1,588
West Midlands	1,732
East Midlands	2,175
East of England	1,421
South East and London	2,401
South West	4,906

Resources for the service were allocated based on the region's share of the total number of holdings in England.

A restructured service focussing on the business implications of the single payment scheme began delivery in October 2005 until March 2007. The restructured service has a target of delivering one-to-one advice to 15,000 farmers over its lifetime.

Hill Farming

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average income for a hill farmer in *(a)* Cumbria and *(b)* England has been in each year since 1997. [19183]

Jim Knight: Information on the average income for a hill farmer in *(a)* Cumbria and *(b)* England in each year since 1997 is given in the following table:

Net farm income—grazing livestock (LFA) farms

£

March-February	*Cumbria*	*England*
1997–98	21,500	12,700
1998–99	12,400	6,200
1999–2000	10,700	5,600
2000–01	14,200	5,900
2001–02[1]	17,700	7,400
2002–03	20,100	17,700
2003–04	16,700	14,900

[1] Excludes farms subjected to compulsory foot and mouth disease cull.

Source:
Farm business survey

Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type capital of the business.

Non-native Species

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made in meeting the eight key recommendations contained in the 2003 review of policy on non-native species; and if she will make a statement. [19131]

Jim Knight: The review of non-native species policy was undertaken by a working group comprising representatives from Government, the devolved administrations, the statutory nature conservation agencies, conservation and animal welfare NGOs and the trade sector. Their report, published in 2003, contained eight key and 34 supporting recommendations.

The review was carried out on a Great Britain basis, however, this answer relates to progress made within England, as responsibility for taking forward the recommendations falls to each of the devolved administrations. In 2003 a joint public consultation was published in England and Wales, containing the Government's response to each of the recommendations made in the report. A separate consultation was published in Scotland during 2004.

In answering your question I will take each of the key recommendations of the working group in turn.

The Government should (1) designate or create a single lead organisation to undertake the role of co-ordinating and ensuring consistency of application of non-native species policies across Government.

In March this year the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Bradshaw), announced the setting up of a co-ordinating mechanism to ensure that policy and action on non-natives is joined up across Government and its agencies. The programme board held its first meeting on 12 September and plans further meetings on a quarterly basis. Minutes of the meetings will be published on the Defra website.

(2) Develop comprehensive, accepted risk assessment procedures to assess risks posed by non-native species and identify and prioritise prevention action.

A research contract to develop a comprehensive risk assessment methodology was completed in February of this year. The scheme is based upon the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) pest risk assessment scheme used for plant quarantine purposes, adapted to be applicable to all taxonomic groups. It has been designed to generate an assessment of risk based on a three point scale of high, medium and low risk. A joint programme of peer review and further testing is being agreed between DEFRA and the Scottish Executive and will begin shortly.

(3) Develop codes of conduct to help prevent introductions for all relevant sectors in a participative fashion involving all relevant stakeholders.

The first code of practice, for the horticultural sector, was launched by the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Bradshaw) in March 2003. It is published in full on the Defra website, and has been summarised in a leaflet. This code should form a template for other codes—one for each vector of introduction. The programme board has suggested that a code for the pet trade should be the next to be developed in close association with the industry.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill, currently before Parliament, includes a provision to give the Secretary of State the power to issue or approve codes of practice in connection with non-native species. These codes will not be statutory, but may be used as evidence in any court proceedings and may be taken into account by the court when sentencing. A similar power has already been introduced within Scotland.

(4) Develop a targeted education and awareness strategy involving all relevant sectors.

The programme board will establish working groups to take forward the review recommendations, and to fulfil our international obligations. It has suggested that an education and public awareness group should be established immediately. Membership of working groups will be drawn from Government and its agencies, the academic and professional sectors and non-governmental organisations.

(5) Revise and update existing legislation to improve handling of invasive non-native species issue.

A consultation on part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the principal piece of legislation which protects our native wildlife, was carried out in England and Wales last winter. This raised a number of issues associated with the legislative controls on non-native species, and we are taking forward two of these in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill. In addition to the power to issue or approve codes of practice, mentioned above, the Bill contains a power for the Secretary of State to ban the sale of certain non-native species, to be listed by order. There are no species proposed at this stage; any proposals will be the subject of full consultation in due course. We will develop a coherent package of further proposals for future consideration.

(6) Establish adequate monitoring and surveillance arrangements for non-native species in Great Britain.

A national audit of non-native species has been carried out within Scotland and England, and this will form the basis of a research project to be let shortly to carry out an audit of current monitoring activity in Great Britain in relation to non-native species. This will identify where the most significant gaps lie in existing capacity, and what improvements can be made.

(7) Establish policies with respect to management and control of invasive non-native species currently present or newly arrived in the wild, and develop operational capacity to implement these policies.

It is not possible to take action against all of the non-native species currently present in the wild. A sound risk assessment process will provide the scientific basis for decisions about priorities for management and control of individual species.

(8) Stakeholders should be fully consulted and engaged in development of invasive non-native species policies and actions through a mechanism such as a consultative forum.

The holding of a regular forum, to which all relevant stakeholders are invited, is a valuable way to ensure a wider understanding and ownership of the issues. Two annual events have been held to date, and a further forum is scheduled to take place next spring.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration Appeals

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the immigration appeal lodged by Mr. Schneider (Ref. 189248) on 11 March 2005 will be determined and if she will make a statement. [22877]

Bridget Prentice: The asylum and immigration tribunal (AIT) has confirmed, from the reference provided in the question, that it is not currently in receipt of appeal papers from a Mr. Schneider.

Further checks made with the immigration and nationality directorate (IND) of the Home Office has confirmed that a Mr. Schneider lodged an appeal on human rights grounds with it on 11 March 2005. This appeal is currently awaiting transfer to the AIT in accordance with the transitional provisions set out in

The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 (Commencement No. 5 and Transitional Provisions) Order 2005 (SI 2005/565).

The IND has confirmed that the appeal papers will be transferred to the AIT within the next 14 working days. Upon receipt of the appeal papers the AIT will list the case for a hearing and send notice confirming the date to all parties to the appeal.

DNA Testing

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures are in place to ensure that laboratories licensed to perform court admissible DNA tests conform to the standards required by the ISO 17025 Certificate. [20883]

Bridget Prentice: My Department is currently investigating the matters raised in the hon. Member's questions, and I will write when I am in a position to do so.

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will break down the number of registered electors by region. [21767]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Chris Ruane, dated 28 October 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning the number of electors by region. (21767)

Below is a table showing the number of registered electors, as at 1 December 2004, for each country within the UK and for Government Office Regions within England. The table shows both the number of local electors and the number of parliamentary electors.

Number of registered electors by region, 1 December 2004

	Local electors	*Parliamentary electors*
United Kingdom	44,649,791	44,180,243
England	37,486,007	37,043,608
North East	1,925,339	1,920,378
North West	5,157,621	5,134,365
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,746,688	3,731,575
East Midlands	3,238,681	3,218,197
West Midlands	4,023,919	4,004,334
East	4,191,851	4,146,513
London	5,237,019	5,021,532
South East	6,097,600	6,023,650
South West	3,867,289	3,843,064
Wales	2,242,655	2,233,467
Scotland	3,873,528	3,857,631
Northern Ireland	1,047,601	1,045,537

Source:
Office for National Statistics

PRIME MINISTER

Committees (Representation)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list departments represented on *(a)* each Cabinet standing committee and *(b)* special or occasional committees set up in each of the last five years. [20637]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the list of Cabinet Committees which is available in the Libraries of the House and on the Cabinet Office website.

Prince of Wales (American Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister whether the Prince of Wales's next visit to the United States of America is an official visit. [21900]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Yes.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry concerning reform of public sector pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [21430]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings and discussions with ministerial colleagues and others on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister how many staff in his Office are seconded from accountancy houses; and how many of his officials have worked on secondment to outside accountancy houses. [20552]

The Prime Minister: None.

Trident Replacement

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Paul Flynn) of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 841, in which years he expects the decision on Trident replacement to be made. [21719]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Newport, West (Paul Flynn) at Prime Minister's Questions on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 841.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the operation of sections 1 to 4 of the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended by section 37 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990); [20192]

(2) what assessment she has made of the operation of section 4 of the Abortion Act 1967. [20268]

Caroline Flint: The Government have a responsibility to monitor the provisions of the Abortion Act and we have no evidence to suggest that sections 1 to 4 of the Act are not being complied with.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what records are kept of attempted abortions which fail and where the foetus survives; [20782]

(2) how many attempted abortions in the United Kingdom failed and ended in a live birth in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [20783]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the then Under-Secretary of State for Health (Melanie Johnson) gave on 24 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1043W.

Adverse Drug Reactions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the number of children suffering adverse reactions to off-label medicines; [18810]

(2) what assessment she has made of the number of children suffering adverse reactions to medicines approved for paediatric use. [18811]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows the total number of suspected adverse drug reaction (ADR) reports received from health professionals via the yellow card scheme from 1 January 2001 to 14 October 2005 for each of the last five years, where the patient's age was specified as less than 18 years.

	Number of suspected ADR reports received, where patient age is specified and less than 18 years	*Total number of suspected ADR reports received*
2001	1,712	21,461
2002	1,634	17,619
2003	2,500	19,263
2004	2,198	20,045
2005[1]	1,942	17,270

[1] Data up to 14 October 2005.

Note:

Data held on the adverse drug reactions on-line information tracking database is dynamic and may be subject to change.

Currently, many drugs that are routinely used to treat children are not licensed for use in this age group. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency pharmacovigilance database does not differentiate between suspected ADRs for drugs that may or may not have a licence for use in children, therefore this breakdown of the data is not provided.

It is important to note that a report of an adverse drug reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the drug. Many factors have to be taken into account in assessing causal relationships including temporal association, the possible contribution of concomitant medication and the underlying disease.

Smoking (Asthma)

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase awareness of the effects of second-hand smoke on people with asthma. [21514]

Caroline Flint: The Government's 1998 White Paper, "Smoking Kills", made clear that second-hand smoke, also known as passive smoking, was harmful to asthma sufferers and that they were more prone to attacks because of breathing in other people's smoke. We have in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle smoking and reduce the illness and death caused by smoking.

As part of our strategy, we have boosted our tobacco education media campaign, and from 2003, we have run campaigns raising awareness of the health risks of second-hand smoke. Our "Smoking Near Children" campaign was the first to raise the general public's awareness of the health risks to children of second-hand smoke.

Our new second-hand smoke media campaign launched on 5 September 2005, which will run until the end of October, focuses on the health risks in the home—as most deaths and harm are due to second-hand smoke in the home.

In September 2005, the national health service updated and reissued the leaflet, "Fact-Second-hand Smoke is a Killer", which gives the latest key facts on second-hand smoke. In the leaflet, it states that breathing in second-hand smoke doubles your chances of developing asthma, and if you are one of the 5.2 million people in the United Kingdom who already suffer from asthma, second-hand makes your breathing problems worse. A copy of the leaflet is available in the Library.

Blood

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the average cost per primary care trust to implement EU Directive 2002/98/EC on the traceability of blood; and what funding her Department has provided towards meeting these costs. [22115]

Caroline Flint: A regulatory impact assessment concluded that most of the requirements of the proposed regulations, implementing this directive, are already covered in central guidance and best practice standards in the United Kingdom. Thus, any costs were being, or would be incurred anyway.

The Department has made £200,000 available to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to meet the cost of developing a reporting system for serious adverse events and reactions.

Any additional cost incurred by an individual hospital or primary care trust will depend on how far it is compliant with current requirements and best practice.

Bowel Cancer

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons screening for bowel cancer in England

is limited to people over the age of 60 years; and if she will extend the age range to include people between 50 and 60 years. [21151]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Men and women in their 60s will be invited to take part in the national health service bowel cancer screening programme from April 2006. We will encourage men and women aged 70 and over to self refer if they wish to by seeing their general practitioner or ringing the local screening unit.

The risk of bowel cancer increases with age, with over 80 per cent. of bowel cancers arising in people who are 60 or over. Therefore, the Department has taken a pragmatic approach by inviting the optimal group of men and women who will benefit most from a screening programme. Also, we are determined that the new screening programme should not have a detrimental effect on services for patients with bowel cancer symptoms. When we have rolled out the programme to the whole country, we will make an assessment on whether to expand the programme to other age groups.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether there are links between abortion and the incidence of breast cancer; and if she will make a statement. [20293]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Government believe that any woman considering an abortion must have all the facts to make an informed decision. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' (RCOG) evidence-based clinical guideline, "The care of women requesting induced abortion (2004)", states that professionals involved in abortion care should be equipped to provide women with information on the long-term effects of abortion which are rare or unproven, including breast cancer. The guideline also concluded, following an extensive review of the literature, that the evidence shows that induced abortion is not associated with an increase in the risk of breast cancer.

Cancer Research UK undertook a study of the risk factors associated with breast cancer, including a further international review of the research evidence on abortion and breast cancer. Last year, this study also concluded there is no link.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned into the UK's success rate at treating breast cancer compared with other EU member states. [20991]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not commissioned any research comparing our success rate at treating breast cancer with other Europe Union member states. This research is already under way as part of the Eurocare programme of research.

Breast Screening

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned into the provision of routine breast checks for women under 50 years of age. [19043]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Forrest report, on which the breast screening programme is based, recommended further research to assess the clinical and cost-effectiveness of offering routine screening to women under 50. This is under way, entitled "UKCCCR randomised controlled trial of the effect of breast cancer mortality of annual mammographic screening of women starting at age 40" (the 'Age' Trial).

The main aim of the study is to evaluate the effect of annual mammographic screening of women starting at ages 40 to 41 on mortality from breast cancer, thus giving a definitive answer to the outstanding question of whether population screening below 50 is beneficial or not. The study began in February 1991, and recruitment to the trial has now stopped at 160,000 women. The results of this study are expected to be submitted by February 2006 to a journal for publication after peer review.

Brucella Viruses

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures her Department has taken *(a)* to monitor and *(b)* to prevent food contamination by brucella viruses; and if she will make a statement. [21555]

Caroline Flint: Food hygiene legislation places the responsibility on food business operators to produce food safely, and there is no requirement for routine monitoring of the food supply for brucella organisms.

The only specific requirements in respect of brucella and food are in dairy and meat hygiene legislation. Raw milk from cows or buffaloes must be heat treated unless it comes from animals belonging to a brucellosis free or officially brucellosis free herd. Raw milk from ewes or goats must be heat treated unless it has come from animals belonging to a production holding which is either brucellosis free or officially brucellosis free.

All susceptible animals slaughtered for human consumption undergo official post-mortem inspection under official veterinary supervision. Meat from animals suffering from acute brucellosis must be declared unfit for human consumption as must the udder, genital tract and blood from animals that have reacted positively or inconclusively to a brucellosis test.

Budget Deficits (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the reasons for budget deficits in primary care trusts in Oxfordshire for 2005–06. [20392]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The budget deficits in primary care trusts (PCTs) in Oxfordshire are the responsibility of the PCTs which are expected to plan for and achieve financial balance each and every year.

Cancer Treatment

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patients with breast cancer have been referred to private hospitals for their treatment in the last five years; and how many were treated in NHS hospitals. [18002]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not collect information on the number of breast cancer patients referred to private hospital for their treatment. The number of breast cancer patients treated in national health service hospitals in England, for the last five years, is shown in the following table.

	Number of breast cancer patients treated
1999–2000	47,497
2000–01	46,827
2001–02	46,702
2002–03	47,578
2003–04	49,546

Source:
Hospital episode statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on cancer treatment *(a)* waiting times and *(b)* targets in East Sussex in the last 10 years. [20446]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The NHS cancer plan sets out our strategy for reducing cancer waiting times. A two-week outpatient waiting time standard for urgent general practitioner referrals of suspected cancer was introduced in December 2000. Cancer waiting times treatment standards of one month from urgent GP referral to first cancer treatment were introduced for cases of testicular cancer, children's cancers and acute leukaemia in 2001.

Further standards of maximum waits of 31 days from diagnosis to first cancer treatment and 62 days from urgent referral with suspected cancer to first cancer treatment were introduced for patients with breast cancer in 2001 and 2002 respectively. These 31 and 62 day standards will be in place for all cancer patients from December 2005. Performance against the current cancer waiting times targets are published quarterly on the Department of Health website. Performance data showing progress towards the 2005 targets are also available on the Department's website at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits/.

The tables show how East Sussex Hospitals National Health Service Trust has made progress in meeting the cancer waiting times targets.

Quarter		*Number of urgent GP referrals for suspected cancer*	*Percentage seen by specialist within two weeks of referral*
1	2002–03	430	94.9
2	2002–03	485	90.3
3	2002–03	510	97.8
4	2002–03	511	99.4
1	2003–04	619	100
2	2003–04	697	99.7
3	2003–04	738	100
4	2003–04	775	99.7
1	2004–05	823	100
2	2004–05	885	99.8
3	2004–05	931	100
4	2004–05	884	100
1	2005–06	1,093	99.7

Breast cancer—one month from diagnosis to treatment target from 2002—East Sussex hospitals NHS trust

Quarter		*Total patients treated*	*Percentage of patients treated within one month*
1	2002–03	54	100
2	2002–03	63	98.4
3	2002–03	41	92.7
4	2002–03	63	95.2
1	2003–04	66	98.5
2	2003–04	66	100
3	2003–04	77	94.8
4	2003–04	77	97.4
1	2004–05	80	100
2	2004–05	62	100
3	2004–05	58	100
4	2004–05	60	98.3
1	2005–06	93	98.9

Breast cancer—two month from urgent GP referral to treatment from 2002—East Sussex hospitals NHS trust

Quarter		*Total patients treated*	*Percentage of patients treated within two months*
1	2003–04	29	89.7
2	2003–04	43	97.7
3	2003–04	36	94.4
4	2003–04	31	90.3
1	2004–05	40	92.5
2	2004–05	32	100
3	2004–05	35	97.1
4	2004–05	37	100
1	2005–06	59	100

All cancer one month from diagnosis to treatment standard from 2005—East Sussex hospitals NHS trust

Quarter		*Total patients treated*	*Percentage of patients treated within one month*
4	2004–05	198	84.3
1	2005–06	344	89.2

All cancer two month from urgent GP referral to treatment standard from 2005–East Sussex hospitals NHS trust

Quarter		*Total patients treated*	*Percentage of patients treated within two months*
4	2004–05	68	85.3
1	2005–06	125	87.2

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the average waiting times for cancer patients *(a)* from diagnosis to start of treatment and *(b)* from urgent general practitioner referral to start of treatment in each of the last 12 quarters. [20852]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Average waiting times for the treatment of cancer patients are not collected. Cancer waiting times treatment standards of one month from urgent general practitioner referral to first cancer treatment were introduced for cases of testicular cancer, children's cancers and acute leukaemia in 2001.

Further standards of maximum waits of 31 days from diagnosis to first cancer treatment and 62 days from urgent referral with suspected cancer to first cancer treatment were introduced for patients with breast cancer in 2001 and 2002 respectively. These 31 and 62 day standards will be in place for all cancer patients from December 2005. Performance against the current cancer waiting times targets are shown in the tables, and are published quarterly on the Department's website. Performance data showing progress towards the 2005 targets was first published for quarter one of 2005–06. Further data will be published on the Department's website at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits/ as it becomes available.

Cancer type: children's cancer

	Quarter	Total patients treated	Patients treated within one month	Percentage of patients treated within one month
2001–02	4	40	40	100.0
2002–03	1	24	24	100.0
2002–03	2	18	18	100.0
2002–03	3	22	21	95.5
2002–03	4	22	22	100.0
2003–04	1	25	25	100.0
2003–04	2	19	19	100.0
2003–04	3	13	13	100.0
2003–04	4	10	10	100.0
2004–05	1	9	9	100.0
2004–05	2	8	7	87.5
2004–05	3	7	7	100.0
2004–05	4	7	6	85.7
2005–06	1	31	29	93.5
Cancer type: testicular cancer				
2001–02	4	189	173	91.5
2002–03	1	167	156	93.4
2002–03	2	191	181	94.8
2002–03	3	164	151	92.1
2002–03	4	177	162	91.5
2003–04	1	163	150	92.0
2003–04	2	178	172	96.6
2003–04	3	200	189	94.5
2003–04	4	175	167	95.4
2004–05	1	129	110	85.3
2004–05	2	144	133	92.4
2004–05	3	145	131	90.3
2004–05	4	170	147	86.5
2005–06	1	588	521	88.6
Cancer type: acute leukaemia				
2001–02	4	114	114	100.0
2002–03	1	97	96	99.0
2002–03	2	100	99	99.0
2002–03	3	106	105	99.1
2002–03	4	69	68	98.6
2003–04	1	66	65	98.5
2003–04	2	77	75	97.4
2003–04	3	57	57	100.0
2003–04	4	84	83	98.8
2004–05	1	7	6	85.7
2004–05	2	9	8	88.9
2004–05	3	4	4	100.0
2004–05	4	9	7	77.8
2005–06	1	29	25	86.2

Breast cancer—one month from diagnosis to treatment standard

2001–02	4	6,315	5,950	94.2
2002–03	1	6,496	6,133	94.4
2002–03	2	7,023	6,642	94.6
2002–03	3	6,941	6,695	96.5
2002–03	4	7,320	7,048	96.3
2003–04	1	7,630	7,395	96.9
2003–04	2	7,808	7,626	97.7
2003–04	3	7,961	7,798	98.0
2003–04	4	7,758	7,507	96.8
2004–05	1	7,492	7,276	97.1
2004–05	2	7,786	7,591	97.5
2004–05	3	7,723	7,596	98.4
2004–05	4	7,818	7,644	97.8
2005–06	1	8,513	8,358	98.2

Breast cancer—two months from urgent GP referral to treatment from 2002

	Quarter	Total patients treated	Patients treated within two months	Percentage of patients treated within two months
2003–04	1	3,763	3,631	96.5
2003–04	2	4,138	4,047	97.8
2003–04	3	4,169	4,053	97.2
2003–04	4	3,810	3,702	97.2
2004–05	1	3,597	3,494	97.1
2004–05	2	3,625	3,503	96.6
2004–05	3	3,673	3,584	97.6
2004–05	4	3,726	3,586	96.2
2005–06	1	4,130	4,028	97.5

All cancers—one month from diagnosis to treatment standard from 2005

	Quarter	Total patients treated	Patients treated within one month	Percentage of patients treated within one month
2005–06	1	42,576	39,430	92.6

All cancers—two months from urgent GP referral to treatment standard from 2005

	Quarter	Total patients treated	Patients treated within two months	Percentage of patients treated within two months
2005–06	1	11,021	14,299	77.1

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 October 2005 *Official Report*, column 538W, on carbon monoxide poisoning, how many general practitioner surgeries will receive the leaflets; which support groups will be included in the leaflet; and if she will make a statement. [20736]

Caroline Flint: The patient information leaflet, "Indoor air pollution—Carbon monoxide", will be distributed to all general practitioners' surgeries in England—of which there are approximately 93,000—in late November 2005. The leaflet will also be made available on the Department's website with links to pages providing further advice on the prevention and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Heating Equipment Testing and Approval scheme, the Council

for Registered Gas Installers and the Solid Fuel Association. The support group, CO-Gas Safety, has been directly involved in the production of this leaflet.

NHS Direct also provides information on carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in its website at http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/he.asp?articleID=417P, which includes information on causes, diagnosis, prevention, symptoms, treatment and complications. Medical advice on CO poisoning is available on the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) website in his and the Chief Nursing Officer's letter to GPs, which was sent in February 2002. Further advice will be provided to GPs in the CMO's update in November 2005.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 538W, on carbon monoxide poisoning, what the relevant support group is in *(a)* north and *(b)* south England for (i) information on awareness of carbon monoxide and (ii) medical advice on carbon monoxide; and if she will make a statement. [21069]

Caroline Flint: The support groups CO-Gas Safety and AIRSAY, supported by the Department through Section 64 funding cover the whole of England. Section 64 funding is provided by the Department to voluntary organizations in England whose activities support the Department of Health's policy priorities and priority is given to applications with innovative proposals of national significance that will complement statutory services and so help secure provision of high quality health and social care and promote the nation's health.

CO-Gas Safety provides information on awareness of carbon monoxide. Medical advice on carbon monoxide poisoning is provided by NHS Direct in its website at: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/he.asp?articleID=417, and on the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) website in his and the Chief Nursing Officer's letter to general practitioners (GPs), which was sent in February 2002. Further medical advice will be provided to GPs in the CMO's update in November 2005.

Cataract Operations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have taken place in the last two years in the threshold level on sight tests before referrals for cataract operations are made. [19026]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Sight Testing (Examination and Prescription) Regulations 1989 require optometrists to check for signs of disease or abnormality within the eye and refer the patient on should that be considered necessary for further investigation.

Judgments on when a referral should be made, or when a patient should be listed for a cataract operation, will be made on an individual basis.

Chase Farm Hospital

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure Chase Farm Hospital retains its accident and emergency department; and if she will make a statement. [18562]

Jane Kennedy: It is for local primary care trusts working with national health service trusts to determine how the needs of the local population can best be met. Local NHS organisations have a responsibility to engage with local people in formulating proposals and to consult formally on proposals for change.

I understand that a discussion document published by the Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust last December has since been re-drafted in light of an earlier engagement process and it is expected to be issued for formal consultation early next year.

Child Cancer Drugs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with her medical advisers about possible links between child cancer drugs and deafness. [19023]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There have been no formal discussions with medical advisers about any possible links between child cancer drugs and deafness.

Some drugs used to treat childhood cancers may have long-term side effects including, in a minority of cases, loss of hearing. It would be the norm for the treating clinician to monitor the patient in these cases.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has produced guidance for the national health service which emphasises the need for clinicians to discuss all aspects of treatments, including any adverse side effects, with patients and their parents or carers.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has made an assessment of the impact of platinum based chemotherapy drugs on deafness in children. [19024]

Jane Kennedy: Platinum-based medicinal products are effective in the treatment of certain cancers, including childhood cancers. They are, however, associated with a number of serious adverse effects. These are documented in the product information, together with warnings and advice, where possible, on how to reduce or avoid these adverse effects. When treating a patient with cancer, the doctor has to weigh up the risks of the treatment against the potential benefits and prescribe accordingly.

The two platinum-based medicinal products licensed for human use have well-defined safety profiles and both are known to cause damage to hearing in both adults and children. Information relating to this appears in the summaries of product characteristics (SmPC) and the patient information leaflets (PIL) of the two products.

The SmPC for cisplatin, which is authorised for use in children as well as adults, contains statements relating to its potential to cause hearing loss. The SmPC notes that cisplatin should not be given to patients with existing hearing impairment as this may be associated with increased toxicity. It also warns that the damage to hearing caused by cisplatin is cumulative and that audiometric testing should be performed before starting treatment and before each subsequent course of treatment with cisplatin. In addition, the SmPC warns that the simultaneous use of other medicines that cause hearing damage, such as certain antibiotics, may make such damage worse. The SmPC describes in some detail

the hearing impairment in patients receiving cisplatin and notes that it is worse in children. This information is also presented in the patient information leaflet.

Carboplatin is not authorised for use in children, but nevertheless, the SmPC contains a warning that clinically significant hearing loss has occurred in children given high doses of carboplatin in combination with other medicines that cause hearing damage. There is also general information about the incidence and degree of hearing loss caused by carboplatin, which is generally less damaging to hearing than cisplatin.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) continually monitors the safety of medicines in clinical use. To date, that is from 1963 to 18 October 2005, the MHRA has received nine reports (of nine suspected reactions) of ear and labyrinth disorders associated with carboplatin. Of these, only one was in a child (one-year-old) who experienced deafness following therapy with carboplatin and gentamycin. During the same time period, a total of 19 reports (of 26 suspected reactions) of ear and labyrinth disorders associated with cisplatin have been received. Of these, three were in children (10 years old and younger) and the reported reactions were deafness for two cases and hearing impaired and tinnitus in the third case.

Childhood Obesity

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in tackling childhood obesity. [18772]

Caroline Flint: Reducing obesity is one of the six overarching priorities of the "Choosing Health" White Paper, published in November 2004. In July 2004, the Government set a Public Service Agreement target

'to halt the year-on-year increase in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole'.

The White Paper delivery plan, "Delivering Choosing Health: making healthier choices easier" together with discrete plans focusing on nutrition, "Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan" and physical activity, "Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan" published in March 2005 set out how the White Paper commitments will be delivered and how they will contribute to delivery of the obesity target.

Contraception and Abortion Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to commission research into economic evaluation strategies for contraception and abortion services. [18460]

Caroline Flint: My Department will shortly be issuing guidance to primary care trusts entitled, "Health Economics of Sexual Health: A Guide for Commissioning and Planning". This guidance highlights that there is evidence and consensus that investment in sexual health interventions is good value for money and in many cases, including provision of contraception and early access to abortion services, cost saving. These conclusions are supported by a recent document "The Economics of Sexual Health" published by the Family Planning Association.

Critical Care Hospital (Merton)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to ensure that she does not fetter her discretion in respect of the call in by the London borough of Merton concerning the siting of a critical care hospital. [19976]

Jane Kennedy: The referral to the Secretary of State for Health of the decision to site the future critical care hospital, which will replace Epsom and St. Helier, at Sutton, by Merton council was made in March.

The referral is being considered by the Secretary of State for Health and it would be inappropriate to comment in advance of this decision.

The Secretary of State for Health is considering all relevant and appropriate evidence in relation to the Office of Surveillance Commissioners referral in coming to her decision.

Dentistry

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will extend the time limit for signing the new NHS dental contracts beyond 1 January 2006 to allow time for evaluation of the new contract conditions; and if she will make a statement; [19737]

(2) how many NHS dental practices had signed up to the new NHS dental contract as at 15 October; and if she will make a statement. [19738]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dental practices cannot yet sign up to the new types of dental contract because the relevant regulations have not yet been laid before the Houses of Parliament. We expect these regulations to be laid by the end of the year. We expect that dentists will be able to agree a new dental contract with their primary care trust from January 2006 onwards.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to ring-fence the budget for dentistry to be administered by local primary care trusts. [20471]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Recent guidance issued by the Department on new dental contracts explained that the Department is looking at options to agree how dental budgets will be monitored to ensure existing investment, uprated for 2006–07 prices, in national health service dentistry is maintained.

Primary care trusts may also contribute additional resources from their general allocation to expand overall funding for dentistry.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will reassess the budget for the provision of NHS dentistry in Portsmouth against assessed demand for dental services. [20472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Resources for primary care dentistry will be devolved to individual primary care trusts (PCTs) from 2006–07. Details of PCTs' dental allocations are expected to be available by the end of November.

Final allocations to PCTs should be based on an equitable distribution of the available resources, taking account of the current level of service provision in each area.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make it her policy not to implement the new contract for dentists until agreement on it is reached with the British Dental Association; [20473]

(2) what consultation has taken place between her Department and dentists on the proposed new contract; what plans she has for pilot studies before any change of contract; and if she will make a statement. [20474]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government intend to implement the new types of dental contracts from April 2006. The draft regulations on patients' dental charges were released for 12-week consultation, ending on 30 September. The draft regulations on the new dental contracts were released for comment during August and September.

The new types of contracts are closely modelled on the new ways of working that have been piloted under personal dental services agreements in operation since 1998. These agreements now cover over 30 per cent. of dentists. These new contracts will be agreed locally between primary care trusts and dentists. The draft regulations governing these local contracts have been designed to address long standing concerns of the British Dental Association and dentists about the current general dental services remuneration system.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list those dentists in *(a)* Portsmouth and *(b)* south east Hampshire who are accepting NHS patients. [20475]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on which practices are currently taking on new national health service patients is not centrally collected. This information should be available from local primary care trusts or by contacting NHS Direct.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average retention rate of NHS dentists within the Lancaster and Wyre constituency was in each of the past 10 years. [20481]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Average retention rate data is not readily available. The following table shows dentists who have left the national health service during each specific year as a percentage of total dentists as at 31 December each year within the Lancaster and Wyre constituency. However, these figures include dentists who leave for a variety of reasons, including retirements, career breaks and maternity leave.

Dentists who have left the NHS, 1997–2004

	Percentage of leavers to dentists
2004	6.8
2003	9.3
2002	9.3
2001	2.3
2000	11.1
1999	6.5
1998	0.0
1997	2.3

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the impact on the registration status of existing NHS patients of the April 2006 dentistry reforms will be; and if she will make a statement. [20620]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists' remuneration, from April 2006, will not be linked to the numbers of patients registered. However, we made clear in recent guidance that the new contracts are not designed to cut across current arrangements for patients to register with a practice and expect to receive ongoing, clinically appropriate care and treatment from that practice, bearing in mind the new National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines on clinical recall intervals.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2149W, on dentistry, how many additional NHS dental patient registrations she expects the additional resources allocated by her Department in 2004–05 to 2007–08 to produce in each *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* primary care trust in each year; and how many people had been registered with an NHS dentist each year since 1997 as at 31 March. [18861]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The additional resources have been used to support the recruitment of 1,000 dentists by the end of October 2005, measured in whole time dentists recruited, and to support a range of other local improvements in dental services. A range of indicators have been used locally to gauge the impact on access to services.

No national targets have been set for registrations in 2000–07 or 2007–08. In keeping with "National Standards, Local Action", the dental reforms being introduced in April 2006 devolve responsibility for local commissioning to primary care trusts and it will be for local health communities to agree appropriate performance measures.

Information on the number of patients registered with a national health service dentist each year since 1997, as at 31 March, has been placed in the Library.

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rates of employee absence in her Department have been in each year since 1997. [21026]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many employees have been dismissed from her Department in each of the last five years. [19725]

Jane Kennedy: Over the last five years, the number of staff who have been dismissed by the Department, for either reasons of inefficiency or discipline are shown in the table.

Year of dismissal[1]	Total
2000–01	4
2001–02	3
2002–03	1
2003–04	6
2004–05	1
Grand total	15

Note:
[1] From 1 October to 30 September.

Fluoridation

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been spent by her Department on promotion of fluoridation of the water supply in each of the last five years; [18851]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to promote fluoridation of the water supply; [18852]

(3) what steps are being taken by primary care trusts in the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority to promote the fluoridation of the water supply; [18854]

(4) if she will define the threshold for strong local support before strategic health authorities approve fluoridation of local water supplies. [18855]

Caroline Flint: It is our policy that decisions on fluoridation schemes should be taken locally by strategic health authorities (SHAs), following consultations with the populations they serve. The previous legislation governing fluoridation left water companies responsible for final decisions on fluoridation. The main initiative the Government have taken on fluoridation has been to introduce amending legislation to make SHAs responsible for decisions and to define in greater detail how they should conduct consultations. The Department has also made grants totalling £428,000 over the period 2001–02 to 2005–06 to the British Fluoridation Society to promote the benefits of fluoridation. This forms part of a wider programme of work to improve oral health and reduce oral health inequalities.

The guidance on consultations and ascertaining public opinion is available in the Library. Under this guidance, SHAs are expected to have regard to both the extent of support for the proposal and the cogency of the arguments advanced. Numbers of representations are not to be the sole determinant of the SHA's decision. I am not aware of any primary care trusts in the Surrey and Sussex SHA area that are currently taking steps to promote the fluoridation of the water supply.

Hearing Aid Provision (Edgware Hospital)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will review the provision of services for those with hearing aids at Edgware hospital; and if she will make a statement. [20577]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has invested £125 million into the modernising hearing aid services project since 2000. As a result, from April 2005 all 164 national health service audiology services in England should be routinely fitting digital hearing aids.

The provision of local health services rests with primary care trusts.

Heart Disease (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals in Gravesham suffer from *(a)* coronary heart disease, *(b)* stroke and *(c)* diabetes; and what steps are being taken to reduce the numbers of people suffering from such diseases. [20058]

Caroline Flint: The number of individuals in Gravesham suffering from coronary heart disease (CHD) and diabetes is collected at primary care trust (PCT) level from the local delivery plan returns. The number of patients diagnosed with CHD identified by practices in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT is 6,696 and the number of patients with diabetes within the same PCT is 8154. Information on the number of people suffering from strokes is not collected centrally.

The Department has set out plans for tackling CHD, stoke and diabetes in the national service frameworks (NSF for CHD in 2000, stroke as a standard within the NSF for older people in 2001 and NSF for diabetes in 2001.) The Department has convened a vascular programme board to improve co-ordination across, CHD, stroke and diabetes.

The Department's public health campaigns make a significant contribution to reducing the numbers of people suffering from CHD, stroke and diabetes. These include campaigns on smoking and healthy eating, and the Food Standards Agency's campaign on reducing salt consumption.

HER2 Testing

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many centres in England carry out the test for the HER2 protein; what the capacity is of each; and how much each test costs. [20357]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number and capacity of centres which carry out the test for the HER2 protein is not collected centrally.

HER2 testing kits cost around £40 per patient.

I have asked Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, to ensure that arrangements are in place to implement HER2 testing in all primary care trusts as quickly as possible.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which primary care trusts applied the HER2 test to everyone diagnosed with early breast cancer, prior to her recent announcement on HER2 testing; [20752]

(2) what estimate she has made of the additional cost in this financial year of introducing HER2 tests for early-diagnosed breast cancer patients from October. [20753]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is estimated that the additional cost to the national health service of expanding HER2 testing is likely to be around £2 million a year.

Information on which primary care trusts applied the HER2 test to everyone diagnosed with early stage breast cancer prior to the recent announcement on HER2 testing is not collected centrally.

I have asked Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer director, to ensure that arrangements are in place to implement HER2 testing in all primary care trusts as quickly as possible.

HIV/AIDS

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in England in each of the last five years for which records are available. [17834]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of people diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in the United Kingdom in 2000–04

	Number
2000	3,850
2001	5,038
2002	6,188
2003	7,213
2004	7,271

Note:
This data is from reports received by the end of September 2005. However, the surveillance of HIV diagnoses is subject to a time lag because of the time it takes for a report to be completed at the clinic/laboratory and sent to the Health Protection Agency (HPA). This will mean that the number of HIV diagnoses shown in the table for 2004 will rise. To a lesser extent, those shown for 2003 may also rise.
Source:
HPA

Hospital Food

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the average amount spent on hospital food per patient per day; and what assessment she has made of whether there is variation in spending in different regions; [18938]

(2) what proportion of total patient main meals in hospitals untouched meals represented in each year from 1997–98. [18943]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table. Data were not collected before 2001–02.

	Average cost of patient main meals per day (£)	*Average percentage of untouched/ unserved patient meals*
2001–02	2.19	8.86
2002–03	2.41	10.44
2003–04	2.37	10.71
2004–05	2.60	10.26

No central assessment is made of spending on main meals in different regions. However, performance indicators on this and related areas are available to all trusts through the estates return information collection system to support local monitoring and decision making.

Data on "untouched meals" form part of a wider question on "untouched/unserved meals". This includes food delivered to the ward and not served, for example, because a patient has gone home, as well as that served but not eaten.

Hospital Treatments

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost was of NHS-funded *(a)* orthopaedic and *(b)* ophthalmic procedures carried out in (i) NHS and (ii) private healthcare establishments in the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by type. [18912]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the organisations and individuals consulted before the Review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, A Public Consultation was issued; and if she will make a statement. [20698]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 265–66W.

Influenza

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the planned stockpiling of anti-viral avian influenza drugs to be complete. [19334]

Caroline Flint: We placed an order for 14.6 million treatment courses of (oseltamivir) Tamiflu in March 2005. Our delivery schedule indicates that we should have received 2.5 million treatment courses by the end of October, and that our stockpile will be complete by September 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will update the UK influenza pandemic contingency plan to reflect the possibility that a communicable avian influenza strain may emerge in Europe, rather than in China or the Far East. [18075]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom influenza pandemic contingency plan takes into consideration that a flu pandemic may emerge in Europe rather than China or the Far East. A pandemic virus is likely to affect the UK irrespective of where it emerges, and our plan provides a framework to deal with the health impact of a pandemic, and the disruption it may cause to essential services and people's daily lives.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2703W, on the influenza pandemic plan, when the updated UK influenza pandemic contingency plan will be published. [19493]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The revised UK influenza pandemic contingency plan was published on 19 October 2005. This updates the version published in March 2005. The plan is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Copies have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated to mental health provision in Suffolk in each of the last five years. [19692]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. However, in 2003–04 and 2004–05, the total mental health spend for all ages in Suffolk was £82 million and £91 million respectively.

Source:
Mental Health Strategies Report

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many GP practices offer in-house appointments with a counsellor for those with mental health problems. [18799]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Although the Department does not hold this information centrally, a report published by MACA (the Mental Aftercare Association), now known as Together: Working for Wellbeing, "First National GP Survey of Mental Health in Primary Care" (1999) estimated that out of the 1,966 general practitioner practices in England which were surveyed, more than half had attached community psychiatric nurses and counsellors and 10 per cent. had access to a social worker, psychologist and psychiatrist. This report is available online at:

www.together-uk.org/temp/GPspandspmentalsphealthspreport.pdf.

By the end of 2004, 648 graduate workers trained in brief pyschological therapy techniques of proven effectiveness were in place in the primary care mental health workforce, able to help GPs manage and treat common mental health problems in all age groups.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner practices organise in-house training on mental health. [18800]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally by the Department. Almost a third of people attending general practitioner (GP) surgeries have mental health problems and mental health occupies approximately one third of a GP's time. Although we are continuing to invest in and improve our services for people with mental health problems at primary and secondary levels, including behavioural as well as drug therapies, GP practices are expected to have a sufficient number of staff who have received appropriate training in mental health issues. In particular, each GP's own training needs will be addressed on an annual basis through the national health service appraisal and personal development process.

It is for each GP practice to decide how it will organise and deliver staff training, working in consultation with its local primary care trust and any appropriate external educational providers.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many air miles were accrued through departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17329]

Jane Kennedy: No air miles are recorded against departmental ministerial travel in 2004–05.

Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the ministerial code and travel by Ministers. Guidance for Ministers on the use of air miles is set out in the ministerial code. The guidance makes clear that air miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity if this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Similar rules are in place for officials.

MRI Unit (Edgware Hospital)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the proposed MRI unit to be available at Edgware hospital; and if she will make a statement. [20576]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that, subject to the necessary planning permission, it is expected that magnetic resonance imaging scans will be available at Edgware hospital by the end of January 2006.

Music Therapy

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department has issued to primary care trusts on the use of music therapy; and if she will make a statement. [19449]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not issued any guidance on the use of music therapy. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision of music therapy. In commissioning services, PCTs need to plan local services near to patients and ensure that they are identifying the health needs of patients and securing services for them.

NHS Logistics

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the categories of products used by NHS bodies which are not currently provided by NHS Logistics; and if she will estimate *(a)* the value and *(b)* the volume of each such category of products for the last year for which figures are available. [9903]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows those categories of products and services used by the national health service which are not purchased through the NHS Logistics Authority, or where, as indicated, there is minimal activity.

Information on the value and volume of products in categories not currently provided by the NHS Logistics Authority could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Spend categories

Drugs (including gases)[1]

Medical and surgical equipment—maintenance

X-Ray equipment—purchase

X-Ray film and chemicals—purchase

X-Ray equipment—maintenance

Laboratory equipment—maintenance

Contract hotel services (including cleaning)

Postage

Telephones

Advertising

Travel, subsistence and removal expenses

Other transport costs (includes transport and moveable plant)

Electricity

Gas

Other fuels (including oil and coal)

Water and sewerage

External general services contracts

Furniture, office and computer equipment[1]

Computer hardware, maintenance contracts and data processing contracts

Business rates

Rent

Building and engineering equipment

Building and engineering contracts

Total purchase of healthcare from non-national health service bodies

Total external contract staffing and consultancy services

Auditors remuneration

Note:

[1] Minimal activity through NHS Logistics.

NICE (Drug Approvals)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the shortest time is that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has taken to approve a drug; [19865]

(2) what the shortest time is that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has taken to approve a cancer drug; [19866]

(3) what the average period of time taken was to assess a cancer drug's suitability for human use following its referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in the last period for which figures are available; [19906]

(4) what the average period of time taken was to assess a drug's suitability for human use following its referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in the last period for which figures are available. [19907]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is not responsible for assessing the suitability of drugs for human use.

The shortest time taken for NICE to appraise a drug is six months from referral by the Department to the publication of guidance, "Technology Appraisal Guidance no.3 Ovarian Cancer—taxanes". A copy of this guidance is available on the NICE website at:

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Forums

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what costs have been incurred *(a)* by her Department and *(b)* by the NHS in setting up patients forums. [18652]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003, the Department allocated £30.192 million to the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) to set up patients' forums.

The national health service incurred no cost for setting up patients' forums as the CPPIH is responsible for allocating funds to them.

Prescriptions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* paid-for and *(b)* free prescriptions were issued in each primary care trust in (i) Essex, (ii) Hertfordshire, (iii) inner London and (iv) Greater London in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [20703]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff directly employed by Barnet primary care trust are *(a)* managers and *(b)* involved in direct patient care; and if she will make a statement. [20573]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: non-medical staff employed by Barnet primary care trust by each specified staff group as at 30 September 2004

	Number
Total NHS staff	1,858
Of which:	
Direct patient care staff	1,362
All Doctors[1]	286
All general medical practitioners[2]	250
HCHS Doctors[1]	36
Practice staff[3,4]	249
Of which:	
Practice nurses	68
Professionally qualified clinical staff	595
Qualified nurses	415
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	180
Support to clinical staff	232
NHS target group health care assistants	232
Non-Direct Patient Care Staff	496
Support to clinical staff	214
NHS infrastructure support	282
Of which:	
Managers and senior managers	100
Central functions	107
Hotel property and estate staff	75

[1] Excludes hospital practitioners and clinical assistants, most of these also work as a general practitioner (GP).

[2] All general medical practitioners include contracted GPs, personal medical services others, GMS others, GP registrars and GP retainers.

[3] Practice staff includes practice nurses, direct patient care staff, administrative and clerical and other.

[4] Headcount figures for practice staff groups, other than practice nurses, can not be shown separately.

Sources:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census.

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of Barnet primary care trust's management of Edgware hospital; and if she will make a statement. [20574]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has made no assessment of Barnet primary care trust management of Edgware hospital.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions her Department has had with primary care trusts in Oxfordshire about hospital bed availability in winter 2005–06; [20413]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with *(a)* the strategic health authority, *(b)* front line health staff, *(c)* the voluntary sector and *(d)* other bodies about hospital winter bed (i) availability and (ii) demand in Oxfordshire in 2005–06. [20490]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department manages delivery including issues such as winter through the strategic health authorities (SHAs), as the local headquarters of the national health service. It is the role of SHAs to ensure appropriate winter plans are in place locally and it is for them to decide how they engage their stakeholder community.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from her Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20187]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected.

School Fruit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1675W, on school fruit, if she will break down the percentage of fruits sourced from *(a)* the UK and *(b)* overseas, by season. [18808]

Caroline Flint: Table one shows a breakdown of the produce supplied by the school fruit and vegetable scheme during the school year 2004–5 by school term and source region.

1: United Kingdom grown and imported produce supplied by school fruit and vegetable scheme

Percentages

Term	*UK grown*	*Imported*
Autumn term	30	70
Spring term	29	71
Summer term	10	90

For individual products which are available from UK growers, the breakdown over the whole school year is shown in table 2—this obviously includes those months of the year when UK grown apples and pears are not available.

2: Breakdown by type of produce supplied by school fruit and vegetable scheme

Percentages

Produce	*UK*	*Imported*
Apples	46	54
Pears	16	84
Carrots	100	0
Strawberries	100	0

We will also be introducing cocktail tomatoes and baby cucumbers into the scheme. We have been working with the National Farmers Union to encourage UK production of these products for the school fruit and vegetable scheme.

See Me Campaign (Scotland)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the "see me" campaign in Scotland. [19689]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has made no assessment of the effectiveness of the "see me" campaign in Scotland. I understand from the director of the national programme for improving mental health and wellbeing at the Scottish Executive that an evaluation will be commissioned within the 2005–06 financial year to track the development of the campaign in terms of inputs and actions, programme reach, results and short term outcomes, at national and local levels. It is expected that the evaluation will be completed before March 2007. The Department will carefully consider the report of this evaluation to inform the further development of shift, the five-year initiative (2004–09) in England to tackle stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health issues.

Sexual Health Clinics

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many sexual health clinics have had to turn away patients during the 2004–05 financial year. [17573]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected. Primary care trusts and strategic health authorities have already developed plans on how they will meet the Choosing Health White Paper target of 48-hour access to genito-urinary medicine (GUM)/sexual health clinics through the local delivery planning process. To support this, the Department is investing an additional £130 million for GUM services and infrastructure in 2006–07 and 2007–08 to enable clinics to expand their services and reduce waiting times. An additional £15 million capital funding has also been recently allocated.

Smoking

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of premature deaths caused by smoking in the past 12 months in the Southend, West constituency; and what action she is taking to reduce the number of such premature deaths. [20788]

Caroline Flint: The information requested regarding the estimated number of premature deaths caused by smoking in the past 12 months in the Southend, West constituency is not held centrally.

Since 1998, the Government have put in place a comprehensive strategy to tackle smoking to reduce the deaths caused by smoking. The strategy focuses on action to discourage people from ever starting, and help for all smokers. We are aiming to create a climate where non-smoking is the norm.

We have banned almost all tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion. Our highly effective national anti-smoking education campaign is reaching smokers and helping motivate them to quit. People who wish to give up smoking can get help from the national health service stop smoking services. We set out proposals to bring in new measures to improve the way the NHS helps smokers to give up in our White Paper, "Choosing Health". We will reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and, through a staged approach, make almost all enclosed public places and workplaces smoke-free. We will consult on introducing picture warnings onto tobacco packs. Together, these strategies have helped reduce adult smoking rates in England from 28 per cent. in 1998 to 25 per cent. in 2004.

St. George's Hospital, Tooting

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much NHS funding will be made available to St. George's hospital in Tooting in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; [20539]

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much NHS funding has been made available to St. George's hospital in Tooting in each year since 1997. [20541]

Jane Kennedy: Information about funding for acute trusts is not held centrally. National health service financial allocations are made directly to primary care trusts who have responsibility for commissioning NHS services for the treatment and care of their local population from local acute trusts.

This is where the specific local knowledge and expertise lies and it is not appropriate for the Department to intervene.

Stroke

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on provision for the treatment of stroke in Coventry, South. [17295]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* It is for the Coventry Primary Care Trust in partnership with the strategic health authority and other local stakeholders to determine the most appropriate use of the funding allocated to it in order to commission services that best meets the needs of the local population.

The Department has set out national standards for stroke services through the older people's national service framework, which have helped kick-start the widespread development of stroke services. More patients are being seen by stroke specialists and stroke mortality is declining. The Department is also tackling the lifestyle factors that can lead to stroke—smoking, poor diet and high blood pressure—both through concerted public health campaigns and through rewarding general practitioners via their contractual payments for identifying and supporting the groups of patients most at risk.

Surgeons

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many surgeons have *(a)* left and *(b)* started working in the NHS in (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) inner London and (iv) Greater London in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [20705]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The estimate of joiners and leavers in the surgical specialties for the period 1993–2004, within Essex, London and Southend Hospital National Health Service Trust is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS): estimate of joiners and leavers in the surgical specialties[1]: 1993–2004—England, as at 30 September

Number of leavers (headcount)

	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
All London strategic health authorities (SHAs)											
All surgeons	156	135	164	170	131	184	189	147	172	169	142
of which:											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	60	74	76	63	54	90	67	76	76	63	61
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	96	61	88	107	77	94	122	71	96	106	81
Essex SHA											
All surgeons	17	10	21	15	22	19	22	20	22	27	11
of which:											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	3	1	8	4	5	1	3	9	6	9	3
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	14	9	13	11	17	18	19	11	16	18	8
Southend Hospitals NHS Trust											
All surgeons	4	3	7	5	6	5	4	6	2	5	3
of which:											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	5	0	1	0
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	3	3	5	5	3	5	4	1	2	4	3

Number of joiners (headcount)

	1993–94	1994–95	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
All London SHAs											
All surgeons	274	214	243	170	171	230	194	217	191	228	221
of which											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	215	128	118	81	92	126	104	113	98	135	138
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	59	86	125	89	79	104	90	104	93	93	83
Essex SHA											
All surgeons	17	44	22	28	24	30	21	21	35	26	35
of which:											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	6	30	8	11	9	12	7	6	21	13	23
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	11	14	14	17	15	18	14	15	14	13	12
Southend Hospitals NHS Trust											
All surgeons	4	8	6	6	6	9	4	5	3	6	9
of which:											
Surgical specialty group (medical specialties)	2	5	1	1	2	5	4	1	1	2	3
Oral and Maxillo facial surgery specialists	2	3	5	5	4	4	0	4	2	4	6

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.

Tryptophan

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) why the proposed limit of 220 milligrames of tryptophan per supplement capsule has been set on the basis of dividing the average therapeutic dose by 10; and what steps she is taking to satisfy herself that this approach *(a)* is based upon scientific data on safety, *(b)* is proportionate in its impact on industry, *(c)* does not reasonably deny consumer choice and *(d)* is consistent with the principles of good regulation established by the Better Regulation Task Force; [17944]

(2) what information she has collated on the levels of tryptophan that are allowed in food products in other European countries; what information the Food Standards Agency received from *(a)* the Health Food Manufacturers Association and *(b)* other industry bodies about the safety of tryptophan in response to its consultation exercise on that subject; and why the agency decided not to accept the recommendations of those industry bodies about safe levels of tryptophan; [17943]

(3) whether the criteria for establishing a safe upper limit for essential nutrients established in the Report of her Ad Hoc Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals have been followed in the setting of maximum permitted levels for tryptophan; what assessment she made of the merits of using advisory statements on tryptophan similar to those developed with industry when setting maximum levels of vitamins and minerals; and if she will make a statement. [17945]

Caroline Flint: Scientific data supporting the safety of tryptophan were assessed by the committee on toxicity (COT) in 2004. In its evaluation, the COT noted significant uncertainties and decided that an uncertainty factor of 10 should be applied to derive a dose that would not be expected to be a risk to health to the general population. The limit proposed by the COT was 220 milligrammes of tryptophan per supplement capsule. This factor is applied where there is uncertainty due to gaps in the scientific evidence.

A regulatory impact assessment (RIA) was carried out to determine the impact on industry and consumers, which was followed by a 12 week consultation period with stakeholders on the proposed regulations and the draft RIA. Tryptophan supplements were banned in the United Kingdom in 1990 and the new legislation will allow the reintroduction of the sale of L-tryptophan at a specified level and purity criteria. The impact on industry was considered and on balance was considered to be positive, given that supplements containing tryptophan have been prohibited for sale since 1990. Consumer choice will also be increased without

presenting an appreciable risk to health. This approach is consistent with the principle of good regulation established by the better regulation task force.

It is understood that three European countries have reintroduced the sale of tryptophan supplements at daily dose levels of between 160mg and 600mg.

Responses were received by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) from the Health Food Manufacturers Association and the Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION), on the approach taken by the COT on setting levels for the use of tryptophan in supplements and suggesting higher levels be permitted.

The COT secretariat has reviewed the data submitted by ION in May 2005 and found that there was no new evidence to that already reviewed by COT in 2004, when it reached its conclusions on the safety of tryptophan that would support a higher level of tryptophan being used in food supplements. The FSA therefore adopted the level and purity criteria proposed by COT, and this has therefore been adopted into UK legislation to reintroduce the sale of tryptophan supplements in the UK, in the interests of consumer choice and safety. We have asked COT to review its recommendation and any new information on tryptophan since June 2004, and this will be considered at the COT meeting in December. Depending on COTs advice the legislation may be amended.

The expert group on vitamins and minerals (EVM) proposed safe upper levels (SULs) for vitamins and minerals using the well-established paradigm for setting acceptable and tolerable intake levels for chemicals in food. Where the data were not adequate to set a SUL, the EVM gave guidance on levels that would not be expected to result in adverse effects. The COT uses the same paradigm in its consideration of the safety of tryptophan as a supplement. However, the scientific data did not support derivation of a SUL, and the COT conclusion is expressed in the same terms that EVM used for its guidance levels.

The use of advisory statements was not considered appropriate due to the severity of the symptoms of Eosinophilia-Myalgia Syndrome in people taking dietary supplements containing tryptophan pre-1990, and the uncertainty relating to gaps in the scientific evidence. COT decided to recommend a daily dose level of 220mg that would not present an appreciable risk to health.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Biometric Passports

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the UK Passport Service decided the dates for its biometrics road shows; when notice of these events was given to the media; what criteria were used to decide which media organisations and reporters to contact; which media organisations were invited; when notice of each event was given to the public; what the cost was of each road show; and what the *(a)* dates and *(b)* venues are of further road show events. [19837]

Andy Burnham: The series of road shows was developed to build public awareness of the imminent changes to the passport and provide an opportunity for the public to try out the technology which will in time be used.

Decisions regarding the dates of the biometric road shows were dependent on the availability of the venues selected; the dates were agreed and venues booked on 16 August 2005. A wide range of local media organisations were contacted, including newspapers, television and radio stations, according to locality and size of readership/audience. In each case local BBC and commercial television and radio stations were invited to attend, along with the main regional/local newspaper(s). Notice of the road shows was provided to local media the working day before each event.

The dates and locations of the road shows were not released to the public in advance. As is usual practice, Ministers' movements are not confirmed in advance for security reasons. In addition, the road show stand was designed to attract passers-by (e.g. shoppers) and the local media. It would not have been able to accommodate a larger audience, had the road shows been publicised more widely.

A budget of £150,000 was set aside to cover the cost of the road shows. This included the design and build of the stand—a resource that could be used in further events, venue hire, staff costs and transportation/set-up of equipment. Feedback from members of the public who attended was on balance positive. Requests have been received from hon. Members for road show events in their locality, though no decision on further dates have yet been taken.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme have had their compensation *(a)* withheld and *(b)* reduced due to their unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [21212]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following information has been provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. It relates to cases finalised in the years shown in the table.

CICS awards withheld or reduced on grounds of criminal convictions

	Withheld	*Reduced*
2000–01	2,311	1,114
2001–02	2,426	1,209
2002–03	2,530	1,352
2003–04	2,446	1,306
2004–05	2,735	1,277

Criminal Prosecutions

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* public policy test and *(b)* evidential test is for criminal prosecutions. [20173]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

Each case the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) receives from the police is reviewed in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors to ensure that it is right to proceed with a prosecution.

The Code sets out two stages in the decision to prosecute. Firstly, there must be sufficient evidence to provide a 'realistic prospect of conviction'. This is an objective test which means that a jury or bench of magistrates, properly directed in accordance with the law, is more likely than not to convict the defendant of the charge alleged. If the case does not pass the evidential stage it must not go ahead no matter how important or serious it may be.

If the case passes the evidential stage then the second stage is to consider whether a prosecution would be in the public interest. A prosecution will usually take place unless there are public interest factors against prosecution which clearly outweigh those tending in favour, or it appears more appropriate in all the circumstances of the case to divert the person from prosecution.

The review of a case is a continuous process, which carries on throughout its life and takes into account any new evidence or information which becomes available as the case progresses.

Drug Treatment Centres (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug treatment centres there are in the Gravesend area. [20084]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The National Treatment Agency has advised that there are five drug treatment centres in the Gravesham area.

Pyramid Posters Ltd.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons undertake work for the company Pyramid Posters Ltd. what the value of such contracts with each prison is; what the *(a)* start date and *(b)* duration of each contract is; and if he will make a statement. [20518]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* Pyramid Posters Ltd. provide contract work within Ashwell prison and have been trading with HM Prison Service since January 2001.During the current financial year (2005–06) the venture has so far generated £10,000 of income for the prison. It is therefore expected that the total value of the contract will be approximately £20,000 of income receipts for the financial year. The contract is run on a rolling year basis.

Secure Training Centres

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff have been appointed to each of the secure training centres in each year since they opened; and how many have left in each year. [898]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of staff appointed to secure training centres each year and the number leaving are shown in the table.

Medway Secure Training Centre—opened 17 April 1998

	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*1 January 2005 to 31 August 2005*
Starters								
Custody staff	[1]—	66	40	39	130	135	88	36
Other	[1]—	30	17	12	10	8	3	1
Total		96	57	51	140	143	91	37
Leavers								
Custody staff	29	33	36	42	61	95	66	21
Other	2	1	4	7	5	6	3	1
Total	31	34	40	49	66	101	69	22

Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre—opened 1 July 1999

Starters								
Custody staff	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	109	60	52	37
Other	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	12	6	5	0
Total	—				121	66	57	37
Leavers								
Custody staff	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	31	48	52	27
Other	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	7	4	5	3
Total	—	—	—	—	38	52	57	30

Hassockfield Secure Training Centre—opened 17 September 1999

Starters								
Custody staff	—	[2]16	22	31	65	25	32	13
Other	—	[2]11	23	19	7	8	14	11
Total	—	[2]27	45	50	72	33	46	24
Leavers								
Custody staff	—	[2]10	33	23	26	25	23	9
Other	—	[2]10	37	17	15	14	18	7
Total	—	[2]20	70	40	41	39	41	16

Medway Secure Training Centre—opened 17 April 1998

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	1 January 2005 to 31 August 2005
Oakhill Secure Training Centre—opened 19 August 2004								
Starters								
Custody staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	234	106
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—	32	12
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—	266	118
Leavers								
Custody staff	—	—	—	—	—	—	77	77
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	11
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—	82	88

[1] Data not available

[2] 19 September 1999 to 31 December 1999

Notes:

1. At Medway, Rainsbrook and Oakhill, "other staff" excludes teachers and healthcare staff, none of whom are directly employed by the STC contractors.
2. Hassockfield's "other staff" includes teachers and healthcare staff, as they are directly employed by the STC contractors.
3. The high number of joiners at Rainsbrook and Medway in 2002 and 2003 reflect the expansion of both centres from 44 to 76 beds. (Hassockfield has 42 beds, Oakhill has 80.)
4. Joiner/leaver numbers at all centres include staff who were provisionally appointed but did not actually start work with children because they did not pass the initial training course or did not receive Criminal Records Bureau clearance. These staff did not have contact with children.
5. Rainsbrook introduced a fully automated personnel/payroll system in 2002. Data prior to this period is limited and accuracy cannot be guaranteed, so has not been included.
6. Staff figures for Hassockfield in 1999 are for appointments after 19 September, when the centre opened. Some staff were appointed prior to opening, but figures for these are not available.

Young Offenders

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether staff working in young offenders' institutions receive training on the management and identification of cases of racism following the inquiry into the murder of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham Young Offenders' Institution in March 2000. [17813]

Fiona Mactaggart: All staff working in young offenders' institutions receive training on the management and identification of cases of racism. The training includes explanations of what constitutes a racist incident and how to report and investigate complaints. It also highlights the importance of taking account of the diversity of individual needs. Training specifically for new officers on race relations includes a session covering the murder of Zahid Mubarek.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young offenders were given custodial sentences in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* offence, *(c)* police force area and *(d)* length of sentence. [20438]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is shown in tables for the years 1997 to 2003, which is the latest year for which information is available. These tables have been placed in the Library.

TRANSPORT

A19

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents there have been on the A19 between Teesside and Tyneside in the last five years. [21779]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury accidents between 2000 and 2004 on the A19 between Teesside and Tyneside are shown in the table.

	Personal injury accidents
2000	134
2001	149
2002	135
2003	136
2004	176

Information is not held on the number of damage only accidents.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the total amount of carbon dioxide released by private motor vehicles in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1994 and *(c)* 2004. [23369]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows carbon dioxide emissions from the private use of household vehicles:

	Million tonnes of carbon dioxide
1990	58.7
1991	58.3
1992	59.0
1993	59.2
1994	57.9
1995	56.9
1996	60.0
1997	61.0
1998	60.5
1999	62.0
2000	61.3
2001	62.0

	Million tonnes of carbon dioxide
2002	64.1
2003	63.4

Source:
Environmental Accounts, Office for National Statistics

Data prior to 1990 are not available on this basis, and 2004 data are not yet available. The figures are on the private use of vehicles and so exclude use of vehicles by businesses.

Central Milton Keynes Station

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when a decision on the upgrading of the platform at Central Milton Keynes train station is expected. [22715]

Derek Twigg: The proposal is at the final stages of consideration and an announcement on the Community Infrastructure Fund grant will be made in due course.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he expects the re-routing of the high pressure gas main from its planned route as part of the Crossrail works at Romford to increase the cost of building the depot in Romford. [20804]

Derek Twigg: The re-routing of the high pressure gas main is not expected to increase the cost of building the Crossrail depot at Romford.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff have been employed on the Crossrail project in each year since the project began; and what estimate he has made of the costs of employing them. [20807]

Derek Twigg: I understand from Cross London Rail Links Ltd. (CLRLL) that they employed 32 staff at a cost of £419,000 in 2001–02, 61 staff at a cost of £2,762,000 in 2002–03, 85 staff at a cost of £5,020,000 in 2003–04, and 112 staff at a cost of £5,080,000 in 2004–05.

The unit that deals with Crossrail sponsorship in the Department, which includes the Crossrail hybrid Bill team, employed seven staff in financial year 2003–04 at a cost of £261,613, and 17 staff in financial year 2004–05 at a cost of £642,267.

Other officials have been involved in Crossrail related matters from time to time, as have officials in Strategic Rail Authority and Transport for London.

Funding Allocations

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made towards basing transport funding allocations on economic development outcomes. [22070]

Ms Buck: The potential impact on economic development is a vital part of our appraisal of all proposed transport investment, and is considered carefully in all decisions on the allocation of funds. The Department for Transport assesses new transport infrastructure proposals using the New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) guidance. This guidance is published on the web and can be found at www.webTAG.org.uk

NATA assesses the impacts of new transport infrastructure proposals in terms of the Government's five transport objectives, one of which is to support sustainable economic activity.

"The Future of Transport" White Paper (July 2004) set out the Government's intention to establish a Transport Innovation Fund.

One of the fund's objectives will be to provide funding to supplement the resources available regionally and locally in support of schemes which make a major contribution to national productivity.

In addition the Eddington Study has been asked to advise on the long-term impact of transport decisions on the UK's productivity, stability and growth.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21309]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

London Olympics

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the North Circular Road between the Lea Valley and Wembley will be designated as part of the Olympic Route Network. [22416]

Ms Buck: Yes, the North Circular Road is currently planned to be part of the Olympic Route Network.

Railways

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the statistics for train punctuality are collected and compiled. [22782]

Derek Twigg: Train punctuality statistics are collected from detailed data covering all train movements on the national network. Actual times at which trains run are recorded automatically at fixed points around the network.

These actual times are then compared with scheduled times, and the resulting differences are used to compile statistics relating to punctuality.

The principal way of compiling punctuality statistics is by recording the percentage of scheduled passenger trains which arrive at their destination within a specified time of their booked arrival.

This percentage forms the basis of the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which is the comprehensive standard measure used to quantify the performance of Britain's passenger railways.

Similar destination-arrival percentages are also compiled where companies operate the Passenger's Charter arrangements for compensating passengers in the event of poor performance.

Temporarily Disabled Drivers

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department has made in preparing draft regulations to allow the issuing of temporary badges for drivers with a temporary mobility impairment. [23526]

Ms Buck: Draft regulations incorporating a number of changes to the Blue Badge Scheme, including extending the scheme to people with clearly defined temporary disabilities lasting at least 12 months, are currently being finalised by officials. We will be consulting on these shortly with the intention of implementing the changes early next year.

Transport Projects

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what transport projects his Department is planning for *(a)* the Hartlepool constituency, *(b)* the Tees Valley sub-region and *(c)* the North East region. [21829]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State for Transport plans and funds through his Department and its agencies a variety of capital and revenue projects. He also funds projects which are planned by others, particularly local authorities, through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process and Revenue Support Grant allocations.

The LTP system provides capital funding to local authorities to cover expenditure on major schemes (those costing more than £5 million) and minor improvement works and maintenance by way of block allocations.

In terms of the block allocations, the guideline figures for the five years from 2006–07 are in the order of:

	£ million
(a) The Hartlepool constituency	[1]11
(b) The Tees Valley sub-region	[1]70
(c) The North East region	[1]410

[1] Exact figures are confirmed annually and relate to the assessments of progress in delivering the LTPs.

In terms of local authority and Highways Agency capital transport infrastructure improvement projects costing more than £5 million, it should be noted that, in July 2005, regions were provided with indicative annual capital allocations to 2015–16 for transport in order that they could prioritise schemes and provide advice to the Secretary of State in January 2006. Highways Agency trunk road projects in the North East included in this process are all bar those on the A1 in the region to its junction with the A19 from the south.

In addition to a number of major schemes currently under construction in the region, the Department is involved with its regional partners in the planning of the following major projects. Progress and timing for these schemes will be subject to regional advice, the future availability of finance and individual projects representing value for money:

(a) The Hartlepool constituency

No schemes identified at this stage.

(b) The Tees Valley sub-region

North Middlesbrough Accessibility Improvement Scheme

Darlington Eastern Transport Corridor

(c) The North East region

Wheatley Hill to Bowburn, Durham

Sunderland Central Route

Northern Gateway, North Tyneside

A1 Adderstone to Belford Dualling, Northumberland

A1 Morpeth to Felton Dualling, Northumberland

A19 Seaton Burn Junction Improvement, North Tyneside

A19 Testos Junction Improvement, South Tyneside

A69 Haydon Bridge Bypass

A1 West Mains to Bridge Mill Dualling, Northumberland

A1 Gateshead/Newcastle Western Bypass Widening

A19 Moor Farm Junction Improvement, Northumberland

A19 Coast Road Junction Improvement, North Tyneside

A66 Bowes Bypass Dualling, Durham

A66 Cross Lanes to Greta Bridge Dualling, Durham

In addition to the above, there are schemes that are emerging through Local Transport Plans and on-going development of the trunk road network which will be considered in due course.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Bank Accounts

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what safeguards are in place for people on benefits to protect the confidential nature of their personal bank accounts. [22781]

Mr. Plaskitt: All personal information supplied to this Department, including bank account information is treated as confidential and its protection is taken very seriously. The Department's policy is that we will only disclose personal data to third parties if the law permits us to do so. We may, for example, disclose if ordered to do so by a court; if it is necessary for the prevention or detection of crime; or if the customer has consented to the disclosure.

Information is stored on departmental computer systems which comply with strict security requirements. Access to the information is restricted and subject to checks, and staff are fully trained in maintaining system security and are provided with guidance on the protection of customers' personal information. Unauthorised disclosure of customers' personal information is a criminal offence under the Social Security Administration Act 1992.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what performance targets have been set in relation to benefit fraud investigations being undertaken in a prompt and efficient manner. [20935]

Mr. Plaskitt: The overriding requirement for all benefit fraud investigations is that there should be no undue delay throughout the investigation process.

For investigations carried out by DWP investigators, agreed standards are in place that require all fraud referrals to be risk assessed within 10 working days of receipt, and if appropriate an investigation should commence within 10 days of risk assessment.

In respect of housing benefit and council tax benefit, a new set of performance standards issued in April 2005 sets out the standards that all local authorities should attain in relation to the reduction of fraud and error in the system. The relevant standard is that all fraud referrals should be risk assessed within 10 days of receipt. The fraud investigation, if appropriate, must then be commenced within 10 days of the risk assessment.

Council Tax Rebate (Pensioners)

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what basis it was decided that the £200 council tax rebate to pensioner households announced in the budget was not to be paid to female pensioners between the ages of 60 and 64 years. [19425]

Mr. Timms: To avoid discrimination we are required to have the same qualifying age for men and women. The £200 payment will be to households with someone aged 65 or over because most people will have retired by this age.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1198W, on disability living allowance, what proportion of people awarded disability living allowance on the basis of behavioural disorder including enuresis and hyperactivity were children. [22298]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The requested information is in the table.

Disability living allowance: number of first awards in Great Britain made (a) *to people whose main disabling condition is recorded as "behavioural disorder-including enuresis and hyperactivity"; and* (b) *the number and proportion of those awards which were made to children under 16 years of age at the time of the award in each of the last five years ending 31 May 2005*[1]

12 months ending 31 May	*Total number of first awards to DLA*[2]	*First awards of DLA to children under 16*	*First awards to children under 16 as a percentage of the total number of awards*
2001	12,500	11,500	93
2002	13,600	12,700	93
2003	13,900	12,700	91
2004	15,700	14,300	91
2005	14,200	13,000	95

[1] Figures are given for 12 month periods ending on 31 May of each year because they are the latest available; those for the 12 months ending on 31 May 2005 were published on 27 October 2005. The figures given in the written answer of 20 October mentioned in the question were for 12 month periods ending on 28 February of each year because, at that date, the latest available figures were those for the 12 months ending on 28 February 2005.

[2] Figures for awards are to people whose main disabling condition is recorded as "behavioural disorder-including enuresis and hyperactivity".

Notes:

1. First awards are those made on initial claims, reviews or appeals to people not previously in receipt of benefit. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. In cases where more than one disability is present, only the main disabling condition is recorded.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for total number of awards and 5 per cent. samples for the proportion made to children under 16.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of disability living allowance claimants were in work in February, broken down by receipt of the *(a)* higher rate mobility component only, *(b)* lower rate mobility component only, *(c)* higher rate care component only, *(d)* middle rate care component only and *(e)* lower rate care component only [22421]

(2) what proportion of disability living allowance claimants were in work in February, broken down by receipt of both *(a)* higher rate care and higher rate mobility components, *(b)* higher rate care and lower rate mobility component, *(c)* middle rate care and higher rate mobility components, *(d)* middle rate care and lower rate mobility components, *(e)* lower rate care and higher rate mobility components and *(f)* lower rate care and lower rate mobility components. [22422]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Figures are not kept for the numbers of people receiving disability living allowance who are in work because a person's employment status is not relevant to their entitlement to the benefit; hence, information is not available in the form requested. The information that is available is in the table.

Disability living allowance: estimated percentage of (a) *all adult recipients;* (b) *adults receiving a care component only;* (c) *adults receiving a mobility component only; and* (d) *adults receiving a care and a mobility component in the UK who are in work*

Adult recipients of disability living allowance	*Percentage in work*
All adult recipients	10
Adults receiving a care component only	14
Adults receiving a mobility component only	9
Adults receiving a care and a mobility component	9

Source:

Family Resources Survey 2003-04. Adult recipients of DLA are those aged 16 or over.

Employment Targets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2484W, on employment targets, when he expects to set the baseline. [20650]

Margaret Hodge: We are still discussing the basis of the long term aim of an 80 per cent. employment rate with, among others, the Office for National Statistics.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what policies have been introduced to simplify the process of claiming incapacity benefit. [17731]

Mrs. McGuire: A number of measures have been introduced to simplify the process of claiming incapacity benefit, including changes to the permitted work rules, hospital down rating rules, the personal capability assessment process and the introduction of computer produced medical reports. We plan to extend and simplify the linking rules from October 2006.

We have recently set out our principles for welfare reform and will be publishing a Welfare Reform Green Paper in the near future.

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have claimed incapacity benefit in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham in each year since 1997. [19164]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following table.

Number of incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham; at date shown

	Number
February 1997	8,000
February 1998	8,700
February 1999	8,200
February 2000	8,400
February 2001	8,600
February 2002	8,600
February 2003	8,400
February 2004	9,000
February 2005	8,700

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. "Claimants" include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and national insurance credits only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money has been claimed as incapacity benefit in Scotland since 2001. [19377]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following tables.

Incapacity benefit expenditure in Scotland (nominal terms)

	£ million
2000–01	848
2001–02	838
2002–03	831
2003–04	809
2004–05	814

Incapacity benefit expenditure in Scotland (real terms 2005–06 prices)

	£ million
2000–01	966
2001–02	931
2002–03	893
2003–04	846
2004–05	834

Notes:

1. Figures are based on data underlying the Country and Regional Analysis 2005.
2. Figures for 2004–05 are estimated using 2003–04 case load and average amounts.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 30 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 2016W, on incapacity benefit, what proportion of the 29,000 people who left incapacity benefit over the last 12 months *(a)* had a closed certificate, *(b)* died or *(c)* transferred to a retirement pension. [19684]

Mrs. McGuire: The 29,000 figure represents the net reduction in claimant numbers between February 2004 and February 2005. As such, it is not possible to provide the breakdown requested.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Gravesham constituency are in receipt of incapacity benefit. [19808]

Mrs. McGuire: As at February 2005, there were 3,600 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in the Gravesham parliamentary constituency.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are waiting to receive incapacity benefits in *(a)* Gravesham and *(b)* Kent. [19810]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Income Support

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the revenue yield would be of restricting payments of lone parent income support to those with children below the age of 12; and if he will make a statement. [20021]

Margaret Hodge: On the assumption that these lone parents would claim earnings related benefits on another basis, the restriction of payments of income support to only those lone parents with children aged less than 12 years would not produce any direct savings.

Industrial Disease RbA12

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will extend industrial disease RbA12 to include frequent and repeated movements of hand and wrist as a cause of carpal tunnel syndrome. [20257]

Margaret Hodge: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC), the scientific body that advises Ministers on the prescription of industrial diseases, is currently undertaking a review of work-related upper

limb disorders and, in particular, is analysing the evidence in relation to repeated movements of the hand and wrist as a cause of carpal tunnel syndrome. Its report is expected in June 2006. A review of the evidence is already on the IIAC website. We will await IIAC's recommendations before making a decision on whether or not to extend the terms of prescription.

New Deal

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Gravesham have gained employment through the New Deal programme. [19811]

Margaret Hodge: Up to the end of March 2005, 1,870 people had been placed into work through the New Deal programme in Gravesham.

Notes:
1. Information on the numbers of people placed into work through new deal for disabled people and new deal for partners is not available at constituency level.
2. Latest available data is to the end of March 2005.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Pathways to Work

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people on incapacity benefit have failed to attend their first work focused interview in each of the pathways to work pilot areas; and how many of these have received a sanction. [14329]

Margaret Hodge: It is not possible to be specific as to the number of people who have failed to attend their first work focused interview as this information is not available in the format requested.

In the period from April to June 2005 a total of 3,531 people in the seven pathways to work pilot areas failed to attend one of their mandatory work focused interviews, however we do not have the information as to whether this was their first work focused interview or a subsequent one.

Where there is a failure to attend a work-focused interview a letter is sent to the individual making the consequences clear and asking the customer to contact their adviser. Where no response is received, the department will, in cases where the client has a known mental health problem or learning disability, additionally undertake a home visit to ensure the individual understands the requirements placed upon him. The application of a sanction is a last resort. A reminder that a sanction can be applied is almost always enough to encourage someone to comply with the requirement to attend an interview.

So the very large majority of these customers will have had their interview rebooked and will subsequently attend that interview (or it may be deferred where additional information comes to light that the timing of the interview is now inappropriate). Only in a very small percentage of cases is it necessary to impose a benefit sanction. This is because knowledge of potential sanctions incentivises people to attend their work focused interviews and the system's safeguards ensure that people do not lose benefit because of misunderstandings or an inability to comply with the requirements.

As a result of these measures it has only been found necessary to impose a sanction, at the end of the process, on 100 people out of the 3,500 failing to attend.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people on incapacity benefit have participated on the Pathways to Work pilots *(a)* in total and *(b)* each month; what the average duration of participation is; and how many in total have entered paid employment of 16 hours or more a week. [14331]

Margaret Hodge: The average time spent on pathways is just over 17 weeks.

By the end of June, there were 115,400 new claimants in Pathways to Work areas. New claimants are expected to attend work focused interviews but their participation in work focused activities is voluntary. 21 per cent. choose to do so and of these, 14,600 have obtained a job. Information is not available as to how many of these have entered paid employment of 16 hours or more a week.

Information on how many people on incapacity benefit have participated in the Pathways to Work pilots is in the following table.

Number of people on incapacity benefit participating in the pathways to work pilots

Month/year	*Monthly initial contacts*
2003:	
October	1,229
November	2,736
December	2,384
2004:	
January	3,350
February	3,217
March	3,746
April	6,371
May	6,438
June	7,432
July	7,075
August	6,895
September	7,133
October	6,652
November	6,789
December	4,882
2005:	
January	6,276
February	6,527
March	6,925
April	6,533
May	6,321
June	6,435
Total	115,366

Notes:
1. Data is to the end of June 2005.
2. Includes customers making a new claim to incapacity benefit for whom pilot participation is mandatory and existing customers who have volunteered to take part.

Source:
Pathways to Work Evaluation Database.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have left incapacity benefit since October 2003 in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* pathways

to work pilot areas to (i) enter paid work, (ii) claim jobseeker's allowance, (iii) claim retirement pension and (iv) to claim another benefit. [14334]

Margaret Hodge: Information is not available for the UK.

By June 2005 there were 115,400 new claimants in pathways to work areas. New claimants are expected to attend work focused interviews but their participation in work focused activities is voluntary. Twenty one percent. choose to do so and of these, 14,600 have obtained a job. Information is not available on whether these jobs are part-time or full-time. A measure of sustainability is not currently available for jobs obtained through the pathways pilots, but we expect to provide robust information as part of our comprehensive evaluation.

The available information for Great Britain and the pathways to work pilot areas is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) severe disability allowance (SDA) terminations from 1 October 2003 to 20 November 2004 by destination

	Great Britain	*Pathways areas*
All IB/SDA terminations	844.2	81.8
Various destinations (including work)	575.8	55.8
State pension (SP)	162.2	15.2
Other benefits	12.7	1.0
Jobseeker's allowance (JSA)	93.6	9.8

Notes:

1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. 'Destination' is the benefit claimed within 90 days of an IB/SDA claim terminating, or for SP, those approaching pension age at their claim end date.
3. 'Other benefits' includes income support and pension credit. Claimants who are already receiving income support (IS)/pension credit (PC) in conjunction with their IB/SDA claim have not been included in this category.
4. The destination recorded has been allocated on a hierarchical basis, in the following order; JSA, SP, 'other benefits', 'other destination.' For example: If the claimant received JSA and also claimed IS within 90 days, they would be recorded in the JSA category of the table.
5. 'Other destination' includes anyone who does not subsequently claim JSA, SP, IS or PC. This will include people who move into work, return to IB/SDA subsequently, die, or leave IB/SDA for any other reason.
6. 'Pathways Areas' are Bridgend, Renfrewshire, Derbyshire, Gateshead and South Tyneside, Somerset, Essex, and East Lancashire

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 percent samples.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with mental health problems on incapacity benefit have participated in the Pathways to Work pilots; and how many have entered paid employment of 16 hours or more each week. [14335]

Margaret Hodge: Information is available to June 2005 on the medical condition of 64,900 pathways participants. Of these, 23,600 (36 per cent.) are classified as having a mental or behavioural disorder.

There have been 3,300 pathways job entries for participants classified as having a mental or behavioural disorder.

Information is not available on the number of hours worked for pathways job entries.

Source:

Pathways to work Evaluation Database
DWP Information Directorate

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have *(a)* taken part in an incapacity benefit Pathways to Work pilot and *(b)* obtained a sustained (i) part-time and (ii) full-time job through a Pathways to Work pilot. [14395]

Margaret Hodge: 115,400 people had made a new claim for incapacity benefits in Pathways to Work districts, from when the pilots started to the end of June. New claimants are requested to attend work focused interviews but they are not required to engage in work focused activities. Twenty-one per cent. have taken part in a menu of activities. For example, there have been 6,600 starts with a new deal for disabled people job broker, and 6,700 referrals to the condition management programmes.

A total of 14,600 people are known so far to have obtained a job. Information is not yet available on whether these jobs are part time or full time. It is too early in the life of the pilots to provide robust information on sustainability. That will form part of the evaluation.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Pathways to work Evaluation Database

Pensioners (Benefits/Assistance)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Kettering constituency received *(a)* the Christmas bonus, *(b)* the over 80s age top up and *(c)* winter fuel payments in each year since 1997. [22601]

Mr. Timms: The available information on the Christmas Bonus is in the table and is based on the estimates of state pension recipients.

	Estimated numbers of Christmas bonus payable in the Kettering constituency
September 1999	18,000
September 2000	18,100
September 2001	18,500
November 2002	18,100
November 2003	18,500
November 2004	18,800

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
3. The figures for September 1999 to March 2002 are based on data from the five per cent. samples.
4. The figures for May 2002 to May 2005 are directly from the WPLS 100 per cent. data.
5. Data sources are not available prior to September 1999.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data and five per cent. samples.

We do not collect information on the over 80s age top up of 25p a week by constituency, however, they are comparable with the figures shown for the 80+ annual payment in the table.

Information relating to winter fuel payments for the winters of 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available. The information for Kettering constituency from winter 1999–2000 is in the following table including details of the 80+ annual payment introduced in winter 2003–04 and now included as part of the winter fuel payment to those aged 80 or over. These figures are also available in the Library.

	Winter fuel payments made in the Kettering constituency	*80+ annual payments made in the Kettering constituency*
1999–2000	17,360	n/a
2000–01	19,395	n/a
2001–02	19,745	n/a
2002–03	19,965	n/a
2003–04	20,425	4,335
2004–05	20,510	4,210

Notes:

1. Data is taken at the specified dates
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five
4. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of how many pensioners failed to apply for each of the benefits administered by his Department to which they are entitled in each year since 1997. [22603]

Mr. Timms: Estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to, but not receiving the main income-related benefit administered by the DWP, as well as local authority administered housing benefit and council tax benefit, can be found in the DWP publication series entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". Copies of the annual reports are held in the Library. The latest edition presents patterns in the take-up of each benefit, for pensioners, between 1997–98 and 2002–03.

Information on other DWP administered benefits is not available.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assistance the Government have given to pensioners since 1997. [20280]

Mr. Timms: As a result of the measures that this Government have introduced since 1997, there will be nearly £11 billion extra spent on pensioners in 2005–06. This means that the average pensioner household will be £1,500 a year better off, and the least well off third of pensioners will be £2,000 a year better off, in 2005–06 than they would have been under the system we inherited in 1997.

The measures include:

Making above inflation increases to the basic state pension in 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 with a commitment to increase the basic state pension annually by the higher of the retail prices index or 2.5 percent.;

Introducing pension credit which replaced the minimum income guarantee from October 2003: over 2.7 million households are now receiving pension credit at an average weekly rate of over £43 and with a commitment to increase the guarantee by earnings annually up to 2008;

Introducing winter fuel payments for people aged 60 and over which are worth £200 for each eligible household and benefit about 11.4 million people in around eight million households in winter 2004–05. We have also increased the winter fuel payment by £100 to eligible households with someone aged 80 or over;

Making the one-off 70+ payment in 2004–05 to help pensioners with their living expenses, including council tax bills. In his pre-budget statement in December 2004, the Chancellor announced a further payment of £50 to eligible households with someone aged 70 or over. In the 2005 Budget, he announced a further £200 payment for this winter to eligible households with someone aged 65 or over. These additional payments will go out with the winter fuel payments for winter 2005–06;

Introducing free television licences for people aged 75 or over benefiting over three million households and worth over £100 a year;

Reintroduced free eye tests for the over 60s;

We introduced a statutory minimum requirement for local authorities in 2000 to provide at least half fares on local bus services for pensioners. From April 2006, a new scheme will provide free off-peak travel to people over 60 on local bus services in England—benefiting around 11 million pensioners;

The age related personal allowances in 2005–06 rose in line with earnings to £7,090 for those aged between 65 and 74 and to £7,220 for those aged 75 and over. This means that no person aged 65 or over pays tax on an income of less than £136 a week;

The age-related personal income tax allowance for the over 75s has been increased, in successive years, by more than the rate of inflation—providing additional help to those on modest incomes.

Savings Credit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the revenue yield for each of the next 20 years from ending all new claims for savings credit beyond January 2006, while continuing with existing claims; and if he will make a statement. [21207]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is in the table.

Revenue yield for ending new claims for savings credit beyond January 2006

	£ Billion
2006	0.1
2007	0.2
2008	0.4
2009	0.6
2010	0.8
2011	1.1
2012	1.5
2013	1.9
2014	2.2
2015	2.6
2016	3.0
2017	3.3
2018	3.7
2019	4.1
2020	4.4
2021	5.3
2022	6.1
2023	6.9
2024	7.7
2025	8.6

Notes:
1. Figures are in £ billions, in nominal terms, and are rounded to the nearest £100 million.
2. Annual off-flows by five year age band, marital status and pension credit components in receipt are assumed to remain constant.
3. Discontinuation of new savings credit entitlements is assumed not to impact on guarantee credit expenditure.
4. For the purposes of expenditure, the average amount of savings credit in receipt is assumed not to vary by age of recipient.
5. Figures are for calendar years.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to publish the Government's response to Sir Patrick Brown's recommendations on reforms to the business appointment rules for civil servants. [22450]

Mr. Hutton: The Government are currently considering Sir Patrick's report which will be published with the Government's response shortly.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Cabinet Office by the Gershon review. [21291]

Mr. Hutton: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual reports. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance reports and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who in the Cabinet Office has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21323]

Mr. Hutton: I am responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Switchover

Ann McKechin: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assistance she plans to provide for vulnerable groups in the move towards digital switchover. [20225]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Targeted support will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and households with people with severe disabilities—defined as those people eligible for either disability living allowance or attendance allowance.

Assistance will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment.

This help will be free for the poorest eligible households, those on income support, job seeker's allowance or pension credit; other qualifying households will pay a modest fee.

We also propose to offer some additional support to those who are registered blind so they can benefit from the audio description facilities provided by digital technology.

The scheme will be established and funded by the BBC, as envisaged in the BBC Charter Green Paper published in March 2005.

London Olympics

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to promote the use of local businesses in the construction and development of the stadiums for the 2012 London Olympics; and if she will make a statement. [15585]

Tessa Jowell: All kinds of businesses, large and small, will be needed to deliver the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics games. Most of the contracts will not be let until after 2008 and tendering opportunities will be publicised by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) when it is established, and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Until then, the London Development Agency and Transport for London will invite tenders for all contracts in relation to the construction or transport requirements of the Olympic park via the *Official Journal* of the European Union (OJEU).

The Olympic stakeholders will work to maximise the wide-ranging benefits of hosting the games to London and the whole of the UK.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what mechanisms will be put in place to avoid *(a)* overspend and *(b)* construction delays on stadia for the 2012 London Olympics; and if she will make a statement. [15586]

Tessa Jowell: Subject to the legislation currently before Parliament the responsibility for the delivery of the Olympic stadia, to time and to budget, will rest with the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). This non-departmental public body will operate at arms length

from Government. It will be overseen by a highly experienced and independent chair and board appointed fully in accordance with the requirements of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. It will be staffed by people who are skilled and experienced in project management and cost control. The ODA will put in place a range of measures which will include tight contract management, effective value engineering to keep costs down and stay within budget at every stage and daily and vigilant monitoring of costs and progress.

The ODA will be overseen by DCMS and will provide regular reports to the Olympic board (of which I am a member, together with the Mayor of London, the chair of the British Olympic Association and the chair of the London Organising Committee) and to me as the sponsor of the ODA. My aim will be to ensure rapid progress and effective cost control to deliver the games on time and within the present funding plans. Within those plans the aim is that the costs to band D London council tax payers will remain pegged at £20 a year for 10 years. I am optimistic that with the expertise, governance and controls that we are putting in place this plan can be achieved.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 715W, on the London Olympics, whether companies involved in supplying goods and services in connection with the candidate city bid are being consulted on the procurement strategy. [21237]

Tessa Jowell: The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA)'s procurement strategy will be fully compliant with UK and EU procurement law, which is designed to ensure that all potential suppliers are treated fairly.

Companies involved with supplying goods or services in connection with the candidate city bid will be welcome, along with other potential suppliers, to comment when the draft procurement strategy is published. The interim ODA will particularly welcome comments and advice from representative bodies such as trade associations, professional bodies and trade unions.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the Answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 715W, on the London Olympics, how the procurement strategy will deal with *(a)* disposable or one-off goods and services and *(b)* contracts in respect of infrastructure. [21239]

Tessa Jowell: Detailed strategies for specific classes of goods will be dealt with in the Procurement Strategy. Disposable or one-off goods and services will be specified and acquired on the basis of best and sustainable procurement practice. This will include reuse wherever possible of both disposable products and end of life for non-disposables. Infrastructure contracts will be considered and implemented based on the criteria, which will also be set out in the Procurement Strategy.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the likely impact on Haringey of London hosting the 2012 Olympic Games; and if she will make a statement. [21926]

Mr. Caborn: We know from the experience of other host cities that the Games will have widespread economic and social benefits for communities' right across London and the rest of the UK. We and our partners in this project will work very hard to ensure that those benefits are maximised for all.

There has been no specific impact assessment of the London 2012 Games on the London borough of Haringey. However, we plan to use a number of existing venues there for training Olympic athletes. These include: Finsbury Park for athletics and Northumberland Park School for basketball, with consequent benefits for the borough.

As a neighbour to the Olympic Park area, people living and working in Haringey will also benefit from short travel times to the main venues during the Games themselves. The will also benefit from the wider improvements to transport infrastructure which will be in place before 2012, such as the upgraded North London Line.

Sport England

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1010W, on Sport England, if she will ask the British Weightlifting Association whether each of its members who has benefited from the Sport England World Class programmes has always been, and remains, a UK national. [22439]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England provides World Class programme funding to the British Weightlifting Association to support those athletes that are part of its 2006 Commonwealth Games programme.

Sport England would expect the British Weightlifting Association to confirm the eligibility of each athlete to compete in the Games prior to its nominating them for funding. Eligibility for the Games is dependent on nationality and, in the case of individuals who hold dual citizenship, a period of residency.

I am in the process of conferring with the British Weightlifting Association about how many of its members that have benefited from Sport England World Class programmes have always been UK nationals.

Stolen Antiquities (Iraq)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to help trace antiquities that were stolen from the Iraq National Museum; and if she will make a statement. [21486]

Tessa Jowell: Under the Iraq (United Nations) Sanctions Order 2003 any piece of cultural property illegally removed from Iraq after 6 August 1990 should be handed over to the police. Dealing in such material, which includes that which was stolen from the Iraq National Museum, is illegal.

My Department is undertaking a number of projects designed to combat the illicit trade in stolen cultural goods. We recently published guidelines to museums, libraries and archives on the acquisition of such items, to help them ensure that their acquisitions are both legal and ethical. We are also funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives

Council to produce a website offering advice to anyone wishing to purchase art and antiquities, to help them avoid purchasing illegally traded cultural property.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Premises (Revaluation)

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the appeals on the revaluation of business premises of 2000 to be completed; and when he expects appeals for the 2005 revaluation to start. [22314]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) expects to clear the majority of appeals against the 2000 rating lists by 31 March 2006. A small number will remain outstanding where resolution depends upon hearing and determination by a Valuation Tribunal or the Lands Tribunal, following exhaustion of efforts by the VOA to achieve a resolution by discussion.

Settlement of 2005 appeals has already commenced. Valuation Officers are currently placing into published clearance programmes those 2005 appeals to be dealt with by 31 March 2006.

Pathfinder Renewal Project

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the administrative costs of each Pathfinder Renewal project were in each year of its operation; and how much is planned for 2005–06. [21764]

Yvette Cooper: The grant claims in respect of staffing, administration and programme development costs for each pathfinder are set out in the table. The figures for 2005–06 show claims between April and September.

£ million

Pathfinder	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Birmingham Sandwell	1.069	0.293
Oldham Rochdale	1.142	1.729
Manchester Salford	4.574	1.551
Merseyside	4.541	3.863
North Staffordshire	1.074	0.957
East Lancashire	3.162	3.302
Hull and East Riding	2.586	0.668
South Yorkshire	2.762	2.829
Newcastle Gateshead	1.481	0.730

Regeneration (Tooting)

Mr. Khan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on regeneration projects in the constituency of Tooting in each year since 1997. [20583]

Yvette Cooper: The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This fund was first allocated in 2001–02 to local authorities in areas of severe deprivation as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2000. Allocations within local authority areas of this funding is the responsibility of the Local Strategic Partnership, based on their knowledge and information of local need. We do not collect information on how Local Strategic Partnerships allocate Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to constituencies and are therefore unable to provide details of how much has been allocated specifically to Tooting. We would anticipate the information being available from Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership and it is suggested that it is approached to provide such information. Information on allocations of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding at borough level is collected and has been provided in Table A.

Three other funding streams have contributed to neighbourhood renewal in Wandsworth—Community Chest, Community Learning Chest and the Community Empowerment Fund have all provided funding for community sector involvement in neighbourhood renewal. In April 2005, these funding streams were merged into one "Single Community Programme". Information on allocations of the Single Community Programme at borough level has been provided in Table A.

Table A: Funding allocations to London Borough of Wandsworth

£

	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding	*Single Community Programme Funding (comprising Community Chest, Community Learning Chest and Community Empowerment Fund)*	*Total*
2001–02	200,000	100,000	300,000
2002–03	300,000	95,000	395,000
2003–04	400,000	377,337	777,337
2004–05	400,000	232,663	632,663
2005–06	400,000	[1]114,748	514,748
Total	1,700,000	919,758	2,619,748

[1] To date.

The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), which began in 1994, brought together a number of programmes from several Government Departments with the aim of simplifying and streamlining the assistance available for regeneration. SRB provides resources to support regeneration initiatives carried out by local regeneration partnerships.

The London Development Agency (LDA) is responsible for this budget and the Young People Agent for Change SRB project in Wandsworth has received—and continues to receive—funding which is outlined in Table B. Again, we do not hold information on how much of this funding has been spent in Tooting.

Table B: Young Peoples Agent for Change Funding Profile—Wandsworth SRB Project (actual and forecast spend)

	SRB capital	*SRB revenue*	*Total*
2000–01	2.43	25.56	27.99
2001–02	131.24	236.11	367.35
2002–03	527.00	565.17	1,092.17
2003–04	476.27	944.04	1,420.31
2004–05	141.50	857.51	999.01
2005–06	10.00	788.72	798.72
2006–07	159.60	574.95	734.55
Total	1,448.04	3,992.06	5,440.10

Tees Valley Coastal Arc

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what types of development the designation of Redcar as part of the Tees Valley Coastal Arc is intended to *(a)* encourage and *(b)* discourage. [22621]

Mr. Woolas: The Government welcome the leadership that the Tees Valley Partnership have shown in setting out an ambitious investment programme, including areas in my hon. Friend's constituency through the Coastal Arc proposals. The Government, and the Regional Development Agency ONE North East, will be studying these proposals carefully, with a view to supporting priority projects that deliver sustainable economic development.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Members' Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Leader of the House what the level of employer contribution is to the pension scheme of Members of Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [21429]

Mr. Hoon: The employer's (ie Exchequer's) contribution to the Parliamentary Contributory Pension Fund is determined by the Government Actuary's Department, which carries out a triennial assessment of the general financial position of the scheme. The last assessment examined the position as at 1 April 2002.

The current rate of employer's contributions is 24 per cent. of Members' salaries. This increased in April 2003 from the then contribution of 7.9 per cent. of Members' salaries. The 24 per cent. of Members' salaries currently contributed by the Exchequer is made up as follows: 19.3 per cent. to cover the employer's share of the cost of pension benefits accruing to current members of the scheme; and 4.7 per cent. to recoup a deficit in the assets of the scheme compared with its liabilities, as disclosed at the 1 April 2002 assessment.

The Government Actuary's Department's assessment is conducted using standard actuarial methodology. It relies on certain assumptions of a financial and demographic nature, including longevity, Members' likely parliamentary career patterns, and the expected level of long-term real returns on the scheme's investments. The Government Actuary's Department is currently undertaking an assessment of the position as at 1 April 2005, to determine the employer's contribution that should apply with effect from April 2006.

The rate of contribution made by employees is either 6 per cent. or 10 per cent. of salary depending on their chosen level of benefits.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his *(a)* French and *(b)* German counterparts about US involvement in future operations in Afghanistan. [22301]

John Reid: I have regular discussions with our international partners, including France and Germany, concerning future operations in Afghanistan.

Bullying

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has undertaken of the prevalence of bullying in the Army; how many disciplinary actions for bullying there were in the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force in the last 12 months; and what guidance he has issued on the reporting of (i) incidents of bullying and (ii) preparations among others to commit an act of bullying. [21531]

Mr. Touhig: The responses to the Army Continuous Attitudes Survey published in October 2004 indicated that three per cent. of Army officers and 7 per cent. of soldiers believed that they had been the subject of bullying in a Service environment in the previous 12 months.

There is no offence of bullying as such. It is not possible therefore to determine if bullying played a part in Service disciplinary proceedings without examining each case separately. However, records indicate the number of complaints of bullying made during the most recent 12 month period are:

	Number
Royal Navy/2004–05	9
Army 2004 (calendar year)	[1]57
Royal Air Force 2004–05	31
Total	97

[1] Investigations by the Royal Military police in which bullying was assessed to be a relevant factor

The Services' policy is that no form of bullying or harassment will be tolerated. A revised, unified MOD Harassment Complaints Procedure was issued as a Joint Service Publication (JSP 763) in April 2005, and includes advice on reporting incidents of bullying. All personnel are obliged to challenge colleagues who harass others and to report harassment against themselves or others. Line managers have a duty to be vigilant in identifying harassment, including negative or hostile behaviour from one or more people.

Civilian Service Personnel

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects the target reduction for civilian service personnel of April 2006 to be reached by *(a)* natural wastage and *(b)* redundancies. [22363]

Mr. Touhig: The reductions being made by April 2006 by the Ministry off Defence will be achieved by a combination of natural wastage, voluntary early release and transfers under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) arrangements.

Eskopi Garrison, Cyprus

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to reduce *(a)* illegal drug-taking and *(b)* excessive drinking amongst British soldiers posted abroad over the last 12 months, with particular reference to the Eskopi garrison in Cyprus. [21528]

Mr. Touhig: No specific changes have been made to the Army's policies on drug and alcohol abuse over the last 12 months. The Army has in place a robust drug policy based on prevention, detection and disciplinary or administrative action. Similarly, the Army's policy on alcohol misuse is based on prevention through education, tackling the symptoms of misuse and where appropriate taking disciplinary action against those who offend.

Education and information strategies for substance misuse, including both alcohol and drugs, have been developed which are implemented at all stages in the careers of soldiers wherever they are based, on at least an annual basis.

Although implemented more than 12 months ago, measures in Cyprus include the provision of additional recreational and welfare facilities within barrack areas coupled with a robust out of bounds policy. The Army Compulsory Drugs Test team visits Cyprus on a regular basis.

F15 Accident

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the full report of the board of inquiry into the USAF F15 accident in Scotland on 26 March 2001. [22874]

Mr. Touhig: I am unable to release a copy of the board of inquiry at present, as the next of kin of the pilots have not yet been briefed on the contents. When that process has been completed I will write to the hon. Member, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the board of inquiry into the USAF F15 accident in Scotland on 26 March 2001 was commenced; when it was completed; and what the reason was for the amount of time taken between the accident and the start of the inquiry. [22875]

Mr. Touhig: The board of inquiry into the USAF F15 accident in Scotland commenced on 27 March 2001, the day after the accident, and completed on 8 June 2005.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21300]

Mr. Touhig: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the Departmental Annual Reports. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Reports and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21314]

John Reid: I am responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1052W, if he will list those consulted over the new name of the King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment; and how many *(a)* district councils and *(b)* hon. Members in the North West were consulted on the new name of the Regiment. [22389]

Mr. Ingram: Further to my answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1052W, there was an extensive process of local consultation on the titles of the new Regiments before the Divisions made their recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB). The conduct of local consultation was very much a matter for the relevant Regiments and Divisions, and they were subsequently not required to formally consult district councils and MPs in advance of their recommendation to ECAB. In making their recommendations, however, the King's Division, where these Regiments sit, were keenly aware of local views.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many letters of opposition were submitted in response to consultation on the new name of the King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment. [22390]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has received approximately 20 letters on the subject of the amalgamation of the King's Own Royal Border Regiment, The King's Regiment and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, of which one was in regard to the new title. However, this does not include any letters that may have been received by the regimental associations, who sit outside the Ministry of Defence' s chain of command.

Military Records

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will transfer to Scotland the index cards comprising First World War Scottish military records, with particular reference to those held at Hayes and earmarked for destruction. [23129]

Mr. Touhig: As I advised the House on 9 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 640W, the Ministry of Defence has no further administrative use for the index cards to the World War I army medal rolls formerly held at Hayes. The National Archives has copied and makes publicly available almost all of the information they contain. The Department along with The National Archives, has actively sought to identify a suitable institution prepared to accept the original cards, understanding the value attached to such records by many people. The women's index cards have now been transferred to the Imperial War Museum and the remainder of the collection is with the Western Front Association.

It would be difficult to extract accurately all the cards relating to Scotland by whatever definition was chosen even if full information was available, and because the index cards are arranged alphabetically to attempt to do so would destroy the coherence of the collection.

Opinion Surveys

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* subject matter and *(b)* dates were of opinion survey research undertaken by the Department and its agencies in the last 12 months; if he will place

copies of the results of each survey in the Library; which companies were used in conducting the research; and how much each was paid. [14808]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has commissioned two corporate level opinion polls in the last 12 months, designed to research the reputation of the armed forces and the Department in a number of areas. The surveys were carried out in March and August 2005 by Ipsos at a total cost of £80,804 including VAT. In addition, an internal survey of Service and civilian opinion on a range of questions was carried out in April by the Defence Analytical Services Agency at a cost of £16,947 excluding VAT.

Details of other surveys that may have been conducted by the Ministry of Defence and its agencies are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

I am today placing copies of the results of all three surveys in the Library of the House.

Territorial Army

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army centres are in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead; what plans he has to open further such centres; and if he will make a statement. [22742]

Mr. Touhig: There are no Territorial Army centres in the Hemel Hempstead constituency. As the hon. Member will be aware, work is currently underway to rebalance the Territorial Army, and the associated estate, so that it is aligned with changes to the Regular Army under the Future Army Structure work. This is a nationwide study that is not due to report until later in the year and it would be inappropriate to speculate on the outcome.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of the school fruit and vegetable scheme has been. [19006]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

From 2000–01 to 2004–05, £87.55 million was spent on the school fruit and vegetable scheme, provided by the Department and the new opportunities fund. From April 2005, the Department has committed £43.5 million to fund the scheme in 2005–06.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Darfur

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Darfur; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the activities of militia groups on that situation. [22013]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian situation in Darfur remains serious. 1.8 million people have been forced to flee their homes and 3.4 million are dependent on humanitarian assistance. Although the latest UN mortality survey shows that the number of deaths has decreased significantly, the security situation has deteriorated in recent months with an increase in banditry hampering humanitarian relief operations, particularly in West Darfur. Road access for humanitarian agencies in West Darfur has been cut and the UN has positioned air transport in El Geneina to meet priority humanitarian needs and is confident that essential operations can be maintained. In central Darfur, the upsurge in fighting has seen new waves of localised displacement. Contingency planning for more disruption is underway by the humanitarian agencies and we stand ready to provide additional support if required.

The UN Secretary General's September 2005 report on Darfur states that all parties (SLA, Government, Arab militia) except the JEM initiated violent incidents. The African Union Mission in Sudan is investigating these incidents, and we are encouraging them to carry out a verification mission to identify the locations of all parties to the conflict, including militia groups.

Developing Countries

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to prevent British companies *(a)* engaging in and *(b)* assisting corrupt practices in developing countries. [21612]

Hilary Benn: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) leads on engaging with British companies overseas. It has developed guidance explaining the effect of part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security (ATCS) Act 2001. This Act gives UK courts jurisdiction over certain offences of bribery and corruption committed overseas by UK companies or nationals and gives UK companies a strong defence against attempts to extort bribes from them. DFID works closely with other UK Government departments, (including the FCO, the Home Office, HM Treasury, the Department for Trade and Industry and the Attorney General's Office) on anti-corruption activities, including raising awareness of the provisions of the ATCS act. We have a productive relationship with the Infrastructure sector Anti-Corruption Forum and the British Consultants and Construction Bureau.

DFID'S bilateral programmes, working with other bilateral and multi-lateral donors, support a range of developing country governance reforms, including procurement reforms. Improving developing country systems reduces the environment for corrupt practice by foreigners and nationals by improving accountability, transparency and effectiveness. In addition, DFID has led in assisting several developing countries to enhance their capacity to prevent and prosecute corruption.

Since untying aid in 2001, DFID make no distinction between British and other companies. DFID's zero tolerance towards corruption is reflected within our standard contractual terms and conditions. From January 2006, procurement by all UK Government Departments will need to take account of the new EU

procurement directives. These include the mandatory exclusion of suppliers, where contracting authorities are aware that they have been convicted of fraud, corruption and money laundering (Article 45 of the Public Sector Directive). Internally, DFID is also currently preparing guidance to staff to raise awareness of what constitutes bribery and corruption which will relate to the provisions of the ATCS act 2001.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the Department decides how much money to allocate to each developing country; and if he will make a statement. [21948]

Hilary Benn: DFID operates an annual review of budgets that includes deciding how much money to allocate to each developing country. The process involves dialogue at all levels starting with country offices and culminating in approval by DFID's management board and, then, by Ministers.

DFID uses a financial model to generate suggested allocations for bilateral country programmes. The model takes account of both the extent of a country's poverty and the likely effectiveness of aid in reducing its poverty. Vulnerability to economic shocks and the amount of aid which countries are likely to receive from other donors are also considered in deciding on the appropriate level of aid.

In addition to the model's results, the regional divisions responsible for DFID's bilateral country programmes analyse a range of factors when considering allocations. These include the effectiveness of multilateral channels, conflict and reconstruction needs, inequality and social exclusion, our historical engagement and the political environment.

The issue of effective allocation of aid is a broad one, which requires greater co-ordination between all aid donors, since the UK itself provides less than 10 percent. of global aid. We believe faster progress could be made towards the millennium development goals (MDGs) if the world's aid was more systematically allocated to countries most in need of, and best able to use it for poverty reduction. DFID has been urging other donors to focus more of their aid on poor countries and poor people, while recognising that security and conflict prevention have a key role to play. In this regard, DFID is leading initiatives in the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to promote information sharing on different donors approaches to allocation and to create a DAC watch brief on aid flows to a list of fragile states.

Economic Partnership Agreements

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many economic partnership agreements have been concluded; and with which countries. [22404]

Mr. Thomas: Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are currently being negotiated between the EU and six regional groups of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. No agreements have been signed as yet.

The timetable for negotiation was set out in the Cotonou Agreement and agreed by all parties in 2000. The timetable is determined by the need to comply with the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) rules. Following a challenge by non-ACP members in the WTO, the EU and the ACP are required to replace their current trading relationship with a new agreement that is WTO compatible. A waiver of the WTO rules has been agreed, but this expires at the end of 2007. EPAs should therefore be signed and in place by 1 January 2008.

Governance

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria the Department uses to assess the quality of governance in the countries in which it works. [21951]

Mr. Thomas: DFID recognises that development and stability can be achieved with very different governance arrangements, as demonstrated by the experience of countries as diverse as Botswana, Chile, Mozambique and Vietnam. What constitutes good governance varies according to the country context. Therefore, DFID does not assess the quality of governance according to a standard set of criteria in the countries in which it works. Instead DFID analyses the quality of governance according to a framework of capabilities: political systems that extend opportunities to poor people; economic management that brings stability and facilitates investment; delivery of policies that benefit the poor; raising revenue and delivering public services; maintenance of safety security and justice; national security; accountability and tackling corruption.

DFID builds effective aid partnerships based on a shared commitment to reducing poverty, respecting human rights and strengthening public financial management and accountability. DFID uses criteria to assess specific elements of governance that underpin these aid partnerships with developing countries.

Within each country partnership, we agree a regular assessment of progress in these three areas to ensure that we are achieving the shared objectives and to inform our dialogue with partner governments. On human rights, for example, we focus on the partner country's own international human rights obligations.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list all the countries in which the Department works, ranked in order of the quality of their governance. [21952]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not list recipient countries ranked in order of the quality of their governance. This is firstly because there is no agreed appropriate index suitable for all countries. Secondly, ratings depend on the quality of data used and where we are most concerned about the state of governance, data sources are often unreliable and inaccurate.

The UK Government allocates aid to each country on the basis of levels of poverty in that country, and the ability of the partner Government concerned to make good use of aid. In making these judgements, DFID takes into account detailed country level information,

and assessments made by other institutions, notably the World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA).

A listing of all the countries in which DFID works and the allocation of aid to each are in the 39th Edition of the Statistics on International Development (formerly known as British Aid Statistics), copies of which have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Department is taking to use development aid *(a)* to reward and *(b)* to create incentives for good government in the developing world. [21953]

Mr. Thomas: DFID encourages improved governance and assists with governance reforms through specific programme activities, aid allocations and use of different ways of delivering aid.

DFID allocates aid to partners on the basis of levels of poverty and their ability to make good use of that aid. Governance is relevant, in that, in general, the higher the standard of governance, the more likely it is that our partners are able to make good use of aid. This is especially true of sound public financial management. The poorer the standards of public financial management, the more control we are likely to wish to retain. If standards of governance are very poor, we may decide not to deliver aid through partner governments but to use alternative channels, such as non-government organisations (NGOs). In these ways, the standard of governance may have an influence on levels of aid and on how that aid is delivered. Recognition of this may provide some incentive to governments in developing countries to improve governance, particularly public financial management.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Department is taking to use development aid *(a)* to penalise and *(b)* to create disincentives for bad Government in the developing world. [21954]

Mr. Thomas: DFID believes that effective aid partnerships are based on shared commitment to reducing poverty, respecting human rights and strengthening public financial management and accountability.

DFID aims to provide appropriate and realistic support. This may include support to Parliaments, national audit offices and other oversight institutions. This helps to strengthen safeguards against bad Government. Where the standard of Government is very poor, aid may be aimed at helping to fulfil core functions, including protecting people from harm, delivering basic public services and providing an economic framework to enable people to support themselves.

The UK Government review of aid conditionally concluded that the UK will consider reducing or interrupting committed aid if:

Countries veer significantly away from their agreed poverty reduction objectives or from the agreed objectives of a particular aid commitment (such as through an unjustifiable rise in military spending, or a substantial deviation from the agreed poverty reduction programme); or

Countries are in significant violation of human rights or other international obligations; or

There is a significant breakdown in the performance of partner Government financial management and accountability systems leading to the risk of funds being misused through weak administration or corruption.

Where a partnership breaks down in this way, the UK Government will judge carefully whether to reduce or suspend aid. This judgment will consider the impact for poor people, and for longer-term poverty reduction efforts, of stopping or continuing aid. The judgment will also take into account any other specific circumstances. In all cases the UK will seek to talk the issues through with partner Governments before taking a final decision.

Low-income Countries

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department *(a)* is providing and *(b)* intends to provide for the implementation of anti-corruption measures in (i) countries which have qualified for debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries programme and (ii) other countries; and if he will make a statement. [21613]

Hilary Benn: DFID anti corruption strategies make no distinction between heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and other countries. The approach must be tailored to the specific circumstances prevalent in each individual country.

Countries qualify for HIPC debt relief where they can demonstrate their commitment to poverty reduction and to sound macro economic management. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also assess public financial management and agree actions that countries will take to improve these systems. Where DFID gives direct budgetary support as part of our bilateral programmes in HIPC and non-HIPC countries, we undertake a comprehensive fiduciary risk assessment based on a thorough evaluation of partner Government public financial management systems, which include a specific evaluation of corruption. Where weaknesses are identified, appropriate anti corruption interventions are designed accordingly.

Corruption is both a symptom and a cause of poor governance. Therefore, DFID bilateral programmes typically include support to a range of governance reforms. Support has been given to improve judicial systems, for example in Kenya, Nigeria Uganda and Sierra Leone. DFID has also provided technical and financial support to dedicated anti-corruption commissions in Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. DFID also supports a number of regional anti-corruption related initiatives spanning many of the HIPC countries, such as the regional anti-money laundering groups representing eastern and southern Africa (ESAAMLG) and western Africa (GIABBA).

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice from. [20154]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) is responsible for one advisory non-departmental public body, the Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board (OSPSAB).

The Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board was created to advise the Secretary of State for International Development on the administration of the overseas service pensions scheme 1985 and the investment of the fund's assets.

The overseas service pensions scheme 1985 is now in the process of being defunded. On completion of this, the Advisory Board will be dissolved.

The Secretary of State is not required *(a)* to consult the Advisory Board prior to legislative proposals, nor *(b)* to publish his response to the Advisory Board's advice.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20155]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) is responsible for one advisory non-departmental public body, the Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board (OSPSAB).

The Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board was created to advise the Secretary of State for International Development on the administration of the overseas service pensions scheme 1985 and the investment of the fund's assets.

The overseas service pensions scheme 1985 is now in the process of being defunded. On completion of this, the Advisory Board will be dissolved.

The Advisory Board *(a)* publishes its advice in the minutes of meetings, under the terms of its freedom of information publication scheme, *(b)* publishes an annual report and accounts which *(c)* are laid in Parliament, as required by the Pensions Act, 1995.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20156]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) is responsible for one advisory non-departmental public body, the Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board (OSPSAB).

The Overseas Service Pensions Scheme Advisory Board was created to advise the Secretary of State for International Development on the administration of the overseas service pensions scheme 1985 and the investment of the fund's assets.

The overseas service pensions scheme 1985 is now in the process of being defunded. On completion of this, the Advisory Board will be dissolved.

The Advisory Board does not hold public meetings, conduct public consultation exercises, conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, or publish a register of members' interests. It does, however, publish agendas for meetings and publish minutes of meetings under the terms of the overseas service pensions scheme's freedom of information publication scheme.

Overseas Aid

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the Department decides how much money to allocate to different projects within each country; and if he will make a statement. [21949]

Hilary Benn: DFID country assistance plans (CAPs) set out the details of how DFID, together with its development partners will support developing countries to implement their poverty reduction strategies. These plans are mandatory for programmes incurring DFID expenditure of over £20 million a year. All CAPs are publicly available.

The plans are updated every three to five years and comprise an analysis of what needs to be done to reduce poverty; and the actions which are currently planned by both the partner Government and other donors to address this. The CAP then provides an assessment of how DFID can effectively complement these activities and where the deployment of our resources can make most impact. DFID's allocations to projects and programmes flow from this analysis.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the overseas projects funded by his Department, ranked in order of their impact on poverty. [21950]

Hilary Benn: All DFID projects and programmes valued over £1 million are assessed annually on their individual performance rather than being ranked. The direct impact of DFID's overall activities and their impact on poverty is covered in the two main departmental publications, the departmental and autumn performance reports.

DFID's 2004 autumn performance report and the 2005 departmental report are available the Libraries of both Houses. The 2005 autumn performance report, which is expected to be published at the beginning of December, specifically highlights the actions and activities that DFID is taking forward to address under-performance against the millennium development goals (MDGs). I will arrange for copies of the 2005 report to be deposited the Libraries of both Houses once they have been made available.

Poorly Performing Projects

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding was *(a)* reduced for relatively poor performing projects and *(b)* increased for more effective projects in each of the last eight financial years. [21946]

Hilary Benn: DFID manages its budget to ensure resources are used effectively, guided by agreed strategic priorities and by any adjustments to individual projects and programmes agreed following regular monitoring. We do not keep a record of adjustments between individual projects.

Poverty Reduction

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the Department measures the relative performance of the projects it funds in terms of their effectiveness in reducing poverty. [21945]

Hilary Benn: DFID's Public Service Agreement with HM Treasury commits us to continuous improvement. All DFID projects and programmes have specific and measurable development objectives Those above £1 million in cost are subject to formal monitoring and performance assessment annually, using DFID's project recording and information system for management (PRISM). We also produce project completion reports and run an extensive programme of evaluation to learn and disseminate lessons.

Reproductive Health

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what aid his Department has provided to reproductive health commodities in each year since 2000–01; [21402]

(2) what aid his Department allocated for reproductive health commodities in each year between 2000–01 and 2004–05. [21501]

Mr. Thomas: Sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, are some of the most cost-effective and beneficial health service interventions available. However, the unmet need for condoms, and other methods of family planning, is very high. Globally, some 120 million women and men who say they would like to use family planning have no access to modern contraceptives. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) also estimates that the global condom needs for prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections is around 9 billion annually.

DFID is working to change the situation and provides significant assistance to multilateral organisations such as the UNFPA, providing £141 million for the period 2000–01 to 2005–06 in core support. An estimated £46.5 million of this amount has been used by the UNFPA for the purchase of reproductive health commodities. DFID is also one of the leading bilateral providers of reproductive health commodities through its country programmes, where reproductive health supplies are an integral part of broader programmes to promote sexual and reproductive health and to prevent HIV. In 2004–05, this included commitments of £40 million for condoms in Nigeria, £6.37 million for condoms in Vietnam and £220,000 for female condoms in South Africa.

DFID has been the fourth largest provider of condoms, supporting the distribution of about 150 million condoms annually. In many countries, financial assistance provided through sector and budget support also enables countries to purchase their own reproductive health commodities, which we believe is an important long term approach to ensuring availability of these commodities.

TB Control

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total UK Government expenditure on TB control in developing countries was between 2001 and 2004; what the proposed expenditure is for (*a*) 2005 and (*b*) 2006; how much of the total was (i) multilateral and (ii) bilateral aid; and how the bilateral aid was divided between (A) project support, (B) health sector support and (C) direct budget support. [21982]

Mr. Thomas: DFID funds TB control through some specific bilateral projects, but increasingly also funds the broader health sector plans of developing country governments by direct financing through their budgets, or through multilateral organisations such as the World Bank. Such sector programmes will build capacity in health services to diagnose and treat all major causes of illness. It is therefore difficult to attribute accurately all of DFID's expenditure on TB control. The following are estimated figures for funding to TB control through bilateral and multilateral channels.

DFID's bilateral expenditure directly targeting TB control was £13 million in 2003–04, and £15 million in 2004–05. These figures may underestimate DFID's TB bilateral expenditure since they only include the parts of projects which were specifically focused on TB control. They do not count the full costs of these projects which often provide funding to services which support TB control, but are not TB-specific. To count the full cost of these projects may be misleading as other diseases and sectoral areas are targeted within them. Expenditure estimates are not available prior to 2003 as information was not collected in a suitable format.

DFID provides grants to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM)[1] and the World Health Organisation (WHO). We estimate that the amount of DFID funding that went to TB control through these two organisations was £4 million in 2003–04 and £5 million in 2004–05. These figures are based on the share of spend which these organisations said they directed towards TB control (GFATM—13 per cent., the WHO—4 per cent.).

These figures do not include DFID's expenditure on TB through grants to other multilateral organisations including the World Bank and the European Commission. These organisations will target some of their work towards TB but do not currently report it explicitly in their budgets. Therefore, we are unable to provide an estimate of DFID's TB expenditure via these organisations.

DFID provides a significant part of its funding directly to government budgets in support of their overall strategies for poverty reduction ('Poverty Reduction Budget Support'). DFID provided £339 million in 2003–04 and £423 million in 2004–05 in this way. Partner governments may use some part of this directly for TB control activities. It is not currently possible to provide accurate estimates of the proportion of PRBS which is spent directly on TB control.

DFID does not have a target for expenditure on TB control. However, we are committed to at least maintaining our level of effort in order to halt and reverse the incidence of TB. We will continue to channel support through bilateral projects, contributions to multilateral organisations and funding to partner governments through PRBS. DFID has pledged £5 million to the global Stop TB Partnership for 2005 to 2007, to co-ordinate technical support and supplies of quality drugs to TB programmes in developing countries, and £200 million to the 'Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria' for the two year period 2006 to 2007.

[1] DFID contributions to the GFATM are made on a calendar year basis therefore the financial year figures above do not reflect the doubling of UK contributions from 2004 to 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Armenian Massacres

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government recognise the Armenian massacres of 1916–23 as genocide. [22420]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The long-standing position of the Government is well known. The Government acknowledge the strength of feeling about this terrible episode of history and recognise the massacres of 1915–16 as a tragedy. However, neither this Government nor previous governments have judged that the evidence is sufficiently unequivocal to persuade us that these events should be categorised as genocide as defined by the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide.

Bangladesh

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions have been held with the Government of Bangladesh on human rights; and if he will make a statement. [22016]

Dr. Howells: I have not had any recent discussions with the Government of Bangladesh on this subject but intend to do so during my planned visit shortly.

We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Bangladesh and take every suitable opportunity to raise this with the Government of Bangladesh. The British High Commissioner led an EU troika call, specifically about human rights, on the Foreign Minister on 26 October. The Deputy High Commissioner discussed human rights with the Inspector General of Police on 19 October. The High Commission, the EU Commission Delegation, and EU Missions have jointly organised and participated this month in a seminar with civil society on human rights.

China

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when negotiations were commenced with China about the next state visit of the President of China. [22228]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The possibility of President Hu Jintao visiting the UK was first explored by officials of the British embassy in Beijing and the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early May 2004. During a visit to London by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao later that month my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister formally extended an invitation for President Hu to visit the UK. Discussions over the timing of the visit began in July 2004 and the dates were formally agreed by the Chinese on 30 September 2005.

Darfur

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the UN and *(b)* the African Union bearing down on the activities of militia groups in Darfur. [22010]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We hold regular discussions with the UN and African Union (AU) at all levels. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed Sudan with the UN Secretary-General this year, most recently at the UN General Assembly in September.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) and my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) discussed Sudan, including the issue of how the AU mission can best achieve security in Darfur, with AU Chairperson Konare during their visit to the AU summit in July. They also held discussions with AU representatives during their respective visits to Sudan in June and October.

We regularly urge the Government of Sudan to rein in the Arab militia, and we have made clear to all parties in Darfur that they must abide by the ceasefire, control their forces, and work towards reaching a political solution.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the International Criminal Court concerning its pursuance of individuals in *(a)* Darfur and *(b)* Northern Uganda. [22012]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary had an introductory meeting with the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 24 June 2004. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) held a working lunch with the Chief Prosecutor and ICC officials on 26 July 2005. At these meetings, and other meetings at official level, the ICC outlined in general terms, progress in its investigations into Darfur and Northern Uganda as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo. The ICC Prosecutor's decisions on selection of individuals for prosecution are made entirely independently and remain confidential until the Court decides to make arrest warrants public. The UK stands ready to consider any request for assistance made by the Court.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21114]

Mr. Straw: Employees of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are required on entry to demonstrate a good standard of literacy and numeracy. The training offered focuses on developing these skills to a more advanced level in the context of the FCO's business, for example writing courses and financial management training, which are available to all employees. These courses will be revised in 2006 to build on the Professional Skills in Government Agenda. Occasionally members of staff bid for and receive funding to attend courses, for example at evening classes, to improve their literacy and numeracy.

EU Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is towards the undertaking of preparatory work in anticipation of the ratification of the EU constitution by the Commission during the period of the UK presidency. [19630]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As I said in my reply to the hon. Member on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 640W, no formal or informal legislative proposals or other initiatives have been proposed by the European Commission which rely on the constitutional treaty as their legal basis. The focus of the UK presidency is on taking forward a broader debate, and taking forward the work of the European Union under the existing treaties.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21299]

Mr. Straw: Efficiency gains for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), excluding the British Council and BBC World Service, in 2004–05 were £6.6 million against a target of £4.7 million. In 2004–05 the FCO reduced its staff by 50 after adjustments for additional burdens, as agreed with Her Majesty's Treasury. These additional burdens are due to increased visa and consular demand, and are thus self-funded.

Forecasts for 2005–06 will be published as part of the FCO autumn performance report later this year.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21315]

Mr. Straw: Responsibility for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the department as a whole by the Gershon review lies with the Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir Michael Jay. Within this, individual efficiency projects, including those of the British Council and BBC World Service, each have their own project manager and senior responsible owner.

Liberia

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* transparency and *(b)* legitimacy of the recent election in Liberia. [21543]

Dr. Howells: The EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) in its preliminary assessment judged the elections to have been peaceful and generally well administered. The second round of the presidential elections is scheduled for 8 November; we expect the EU EOM to make a final report later that month, which we will consider together with other observers' reports.

Prince of Wales (United States Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* Government officials and *(b)* diplomatic service staff will accompany the Prince of Wales (i) throughout and (ii) for a part of the Prince's next visit to the United States; and if he will make a statement. [22778]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall, will be accompanied throughout the visit to the US by the ambassador, Sir David Manning. While in New York their Royal Highnesses will also be accompanied by the consul general Sir Philip Thomas, and in San Francisco by the consul general Martin Uden. At the UN event in New York, His Royal Highness will be accompanied by the UK permanent representative Sir Emyr Jones Parry. Their Royal Highnesses will also be accompanied throughout the visit by a limited number of junior staff from the embassy in Washington, and by staff from the posts in New York and San Francisco when in those cities.

Torture (Interrogation Methods)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken to discourage the use of torture as an interrogation method in overseas countries. [21983]

Dr. Howells: The UK unreservedly condemns the use of torture as a matter of fundamental principle. We have worked hard with our international partners to eradicate this abhorrent practice. The UK abides by its commitments under international law including the UN Convention against Torture and the European Convention on Human Rights, and expects all countries to comply with their international legal obligations. We are active in pressing other countries to live up to their human rights obligations and to deliver on human rights commitments they have made.

International action against torture has been a priority for the Government since they launched an initiative to tackle torture throughout the world in 1998. We pursue the worldwide abolition of torture through diplomatic activity, practical projects and funding for research. This has included worldwide lobbying campaigns for the universal ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol. This year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has committed over £400,000 in our efforts to combat torture through concrete project work, which includes the production and dissemination of a new manual

aimed at guiding police forces on alternative and more humane investigative techniques and a project to increase police professionalism in China.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy of the Government on MINURSO, in Western Sahara. [22029]

Dr. Howells: The UK fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-Genera) and his new Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Peter van Walsam, to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara's (MINURSO) mandate is being discussed in the United Nations Security Council this week. The Government support the extension of MINURSO's mandate for a further six months. There are, however, no plans for a UN referendum to be held in the near future.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Adoption

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what support services are available for adopted children and their new families, with particular reference to children with psychological and behavioural difficulties. [21645]

Mr. Woodward: Under the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, health and social services boards and trusts have a statutory duty to ensure that an adoption service is in place to meet the needs, in relation to adoption, of children who have been adopted, parents and guardians of such children, and persons who have adopted or may adopt a child.

As part of this service, adoption agencies may pay adoption allowances where certain criteria are met, which include circumstances where children suffer from psychological and behavioural difficulties.

The Department's Adopting Best Care Report also recommended that boards and trusts make provision for "fast-track" access to child and adult psychiatry and psychology services for looked after children, adopted children and their families.

Alternative Fuels

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase the use of alternative fuels in Northern Ireland. [21620]

Angela E. Smith: The draft Budget proposal announced on 25 October 2005 created a new energy and environment fund. This enhances Northern Ireland's ability to produce sustainable energy by securing alternative sources of fuel.

The fund will complement and significantly enhance existing initiatives by allocating £10 million in 2006–07 and £25 million in 2007–08 for capital investment in renewable energy with a further £5 million and £10 million in the respective years being earmarked for encouraging research and development of renewable forms of energy. This will help secure energy from biomass, waste, geothermal, solar and tidal stream power sources and will also encourage scope for the use of bio-fuels. Furthermore, it will, in turn, raise innovation and skills levels and also offer significant opportunities for the creation of new rural businesses involved in renewable energy supply.

Additionally, householders will be assisted to incorporate renewable energy within their homes thereby reducing both their dependence on fossil fuels and also overall energy costs.

The renewable obligation which was introduced on 1 April 2005 will continue as the main means to stimulate the supply of electricity from renewable sources which has now increased by 120 percent. to reach 3.5 percent. of consumption.

Asbestos

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take action to stop the *(a)* disposal of and *(b)* handling of asbestos waste at Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin. [21650]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment has no legal grounds to either suspend or revoke the current waste management licence to store and handle asbestos waste at the transfer station at Crosshill. The site operator has planning permission and a valid waste management licence for the temporary storage of asbestos. The Department is currently investigating a complaint about non-compliant waste deposited within the curtilage of the site. A judicial review of the planning permission is ongoing.

Assaults

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been convicted of assaulting their partner in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [20607]

Mr. Hanson: Statistics relating to convictions for persons who have assaulted their partner are presently not available. I anticipate however that this information will become available towards the end of next year with the further development of the new Causeway information system.

Assets Recovery Agency

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases were *(a)* investigated, *(b)* successfully concluded, *(c)* closed without action and *(d)* under investigation by the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland. [21177]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of cases investigated, successfully concluded, closed without action and still under investigation this year is detailed in the following table.

	Total	2005-06 (at 30 September 2005)
Cases referred	94	25
Cases under active investigation	62	40
Cases concluded (no recovery order)	4	2
Withdrawn cases	42	17

Benefit Payments

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants are in receipt of *(a)* disability living allowance benefits, *(b)* incapacity benefit, *(c)* income support and *(d)* housing benefits, broken down by (i) district housing executive area and (ii) parliamentary constituency; and if he will make a statement. [21251]

Mr. Hanson: It is not a condition of tenancy for housing executive tenants to disclose their source of income, therefore the information requested is only available for 78 percent. of tenants who are in receipt of housing benefit.

A breakdown of benefits, as requested, received by these 78 percent. of tenants, is detailed in the following list by housing executive district area.

Information is not held on a parliamentary constituency basis.

Housing benefit is available to help people on low incomes to pay their rent. Income can be from wages or benefits or a combination of both. Of the remaining 22 per cent. of housing executive tenants, there will be those in receipt of benefits but this information is not available to the Northern Ireland housing executive.

Number

Nine District	*(a)* Tenants in receipt of DLA/AA[1]	*(b)* Tenants in receipt of incapacity benefit	*(c)* Tenants in receipt of IS/JSA(IB) PC(G)[2]	*(d)* Tenants in receipt of housing benefit
Belfast 1	1,040	114	1,712	1,903
Belfast 2	1,400	243	2,272	2,809
Belfast 3	1,768	168	2,800	3,040
Belfast 4	1,532	299	2,558	3,428
Belfast 5	1,272	209	2,258	2,728
Belfast 6	1,403	193	2,485	3,031
Belfast 7	1,243	183	2,245	2,623
Bangor	815	141	1,473	1,941
Newtownards	1,206	224	2,221	2,940
Castlereagh	1,091	220	1,840	2,475
Lisburn	1,456	258	2,327	3,019
Poleglass	743	64	1,658	1,800
Downpatrick	997	125	1,635	1,974
Banbridge	720	117	1,116	1,438
Newry	1,395	133	2,400	2,747
Armagh	732	122	1,237	1,521
Lurgan	1,129	142	1,793	2,189
Portadown	574	115	990	1,243
Dungannon	841	147	1,354	1,594
Fermanagh	902	87	1,654	1,875
Ballymena	681	169	1,689	2,186
Antrim	786	166	1,478	1,915
Newtownabbey 1	684	119	1,352	1,701
Newtownabbey 2	644	105	1,295	1,695
Carrickfergus	503	124	1,139	1,492
Larne	384	68	866	1,130
Ballycastle	249	42	605	733
Ballymoney	514	98	1,000	1,237
Coleraine	746	154	2,028	2,523
Derry 1	1,024	138	1,948	2,151
Derry 2	921	161	1,708	2,057
Derry 3	987	104	2,132	2,316
Limavady	578	71	1,123	1,267
Magherafelt	453	87	863	1,106
Strabane	1,013	101	1,859	2,084
Omagh	830	82	1,429	1,593
Cookstown	465	70	779	916
Total	33,721	5,163	61,321	74,120

[1] DLA refers to disability allowance (care and mobility). AA refers attendance allowance.

[2] IS refers to income support JSA(IB) refers jobseeker's allowance income based PC(G) refers pension credit guarantee credit. These three benefits refer to the three categories of IS claims.

Note:

1. Claimants in receipt of IS/JSA(IB)/PC(G) may also be in receipt of AA or DLA, therefore there is an overlap with these figures.
2. Claimants in receipt of incapacity may also be in receipt of DLA.

Cardiology

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses specialising in cardiac care there are in Northern Ireland hospitals. [21365]

Mr. Woodward: The information required is provided in the table.

Number of (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care in NI Hospitals as at October 2005

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Altnagelvin hospital	12	12.00	47	39.62
Belfast city hospital	12	12.00	69	57.70
Causeway hospital	1	1.00	6	6.00
Craigavon Area hospital	7	6.30	49	44.65
Lagan Valley hospital	1	1.00	2	2.00
Downe hospital	1	1.00	1	1.00
Mater Infirmorum hospital	4	4.00	29	26.30
Daisy Hill hospital	2	1.00	21	17.17
Royal group of hospitals	64	60.85	299	268.65
Tyrone county hospital	1	1.00	10	8.30
Erne hospital	1	1.00	11	8.50
Ulster hospital	8	8.00	54	46.79
Antrim Area hospital	4	n/a	50	34.42
Mid-Ulster hospital	0	0.00	16	13.54
Whiteabbey hospital	1	n/a	15	12.30
Total	119	n/a	679	586.94

n/a = Not available

Notes:

1. Headcount figures for nursing staff at the Ulster hospital are approximate as some posts are shared.
2. The whole-time equivalent figures for doctors working in Antrim area hospital and Whiteabbey hospital are not available (n/a), as the headcount figure includes general consultant physicians with interest and experience in cardiac care, but who are not full-time Cardiologists.
3. WTE: Whole-time equivalent.

Source:

NI HSS trusts

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses specialising in cardiac care there are in (i) Antrim Area Hospital, (ii) Royal Victoria Hospital, (iii) the Belfast City Hospital, (iv) Craigavon Hospital and (v) Altnagelvin Hospital. [21366]

Mr. Woodward: The information required is provided in the table.

Number of (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care in (i) Antrim area Hospital, (ii) Royal Victoria Hospital, (iii) the Belfast City Hospital, (iv) Craigavon Hospital and (v) Altnagelvin Hospital as at October 2005

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
Antrim Area Hospital	4	N/A	30	34.42
Royal Group of Hospitals	64	60.85	299	268.65
Belfast City Hospital	12	12.00	69	57.70
Craigavon Area Hospital	7	6.30	49	44.65
Altnagelvin Hospital	12	12.00	47	39.62
Total	99	91.15	514	445.04

Notes:

1. The Whole-Time Equivalent figures for doctors working in Antrim Area Hospital are not available (N/A), as the headcount figure includes General Consultant Physicians with interest and experience in Cardiac Care, but who are not full-time Cardiologists.
2. WTE: Whole-Time Equivalent.

Source:

NIHSS Trusts

CCEA

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department for Education plans to publish the conclusions of the evaluation by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment of its trials of pupil profiling. [21325]

Angela E. Smith: The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will publish annually, in or around October, reports on the trials of the Pupil Profile on an on-going basis. It has placed the reports of the 2004–05 trials and feasibility studies on its website.

Child Support Agency Management Board

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been promoted to the Child Support Agency Management Board in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; and what their religious background was. [20775]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to give details of the community background of staff promoted to the Child Support Agency Management Board in Northern Ireland as it is an offence under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (subject to certain specified exceptions) to disclose information on the community background of an individual which has been obtained or used for the purposes of monitoring.

Clinical Academics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the number of clinical academics teaching medical students in the Province has been in the last 10 years. [20047]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available for the last 10 years.

Available figures show that there were 59 clinical academics in 2002 and the there are currently 64. The numbers are likely to increase to 68 by the end of the current academic year with the planned expansion of the medical school.

Crime Statistics

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many young people of school age were found guilty of committing a crime in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21626]

Mr. Hanson: Conviction data is not readily available broken down by Northern Ireland constituency. The statistics included in the following table are for offenders aged 10 to 18-years, and are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.

2003 data is currently the most recent available. Figures for 1999 have not been included as they can not be compared due to changes in the recording mechanism.

Number persons aged 10–18-years found guilty by police district command unit[1]

	2003	2002	2001[2]	2000[2]
Antrim	74	75	50	99
Ards	88	102	102	85
Armagh	91	65	69	71
Banbridge	47	66	47	68
Belfast East	126	104	148	176
Belfast North	342	274	227	303
Belfast South	114	95	96	156
Belfast West	294	247	216	304
Ballymena	139	131	124	90
Bally money	28	31	16	28
Carrickfergus	36	74	60	70
Coleraine	101	118	86	86
Cookstown	49	50	46	44
Craigavon	138	145	131	136
Castlereagh	75	58	56	72
Dungannon	50	52	84	73
Down	90	99	93	66
Fermanagh	91	113	103	80
Foyle	212	218	257	266
Larne	66	80	66	65
Limavady	52	55	50	62
Lisburn	147	132	168	155
Magherafelt	48	43	36	35
Moyle	21	30	19	22
Newtownabbey	101	80	98	106
North Down	101	134	134	137
Newry and Mourne	102	74	87	109
Omagh	57	76	70	96
Strabane	81	68	67	50
Missing[3]	58	44	51	57
Total	3,019	2,933	2,857	3,167

[1] Data are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.

[2] The structure of police district command unit became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division.

[3] Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Departmental Estate

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total floor space area is of buildings *(a)* owned and *(b)* leased by (i) his Department and (ii) its agencies. [18417]

Mr. Hain: The Department owns 47 properties and leases a further 76. It is not possible to give the total floor space for all these properties except at disproportionate cost.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has spent on newspapers, magazines and periodicals in each year since 2001–02. [20530]

Mr. Woodward: This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

The following table lists the total cost of newspapers, magazines and periodicals in each year since 2001–02.

Financial year	*Cost (£)*
2004–05	70,706
2003–04	78,033
2002–03	78,278
2001–02	68,505

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on information literature, advertising and campaign material in each financial year since 2001. [19588]

Mr. Hanson: This information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21000]

Mr. Woodward: All new recruits to the general grades in the Northern Ireland Office must satisfy a minimum academic standard. Other new recruits have to meet different requirements or standards relevant to the specialism of the specific post/grade.

Departmental Stationery

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all copying paper bought by the Department is 100 per cent. recycled with a minimum of 75 per cent. post consumer waste content; and by what date this target is expected to be achieved; [18412]

(2) what percentage of *(a)* copying paper and *(b)* paper for printed publications used by the Department in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05 was from recycled sources; and how much post consumer waste this paper contained; [18411]

(3) what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all paper for printed publications bought by the Department is 60 per cent. recycled of which a minimum of 75 per cent. post consumer waste content; and by what date this target is expected to be achieved. [18413]

Mr. Hain: For internal printing and copying the Department uses a standard paper manufactured from 100 per cent. recycled paper with a minimum 75 per cent. post consumer waste. Instructions will be issued shortly on the quality of paper to be used in printed publication sourced outside the Department. Figures for the use of paper and its manufacturer content in 2003–04 and 2004–05 are not held and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the Department's main suppliers of *(a)* copier paper, *(b)* stationery, *(c)* envelopes and *(d)* paper for reports, stating in each case (i) the name of each paper used and (ii) the (A) recycled and (B) post-consumer recycled content of each paper. [18415]

Mr. Hain: The Department acquires its copier paper, stationery, envelopes and paper for reports from call off contracts established by the central procurement directorate, DFP. The five main contractors are Banner Business Supplies, Office Depot, Antalis, McNaughton and Supplies Team. The copier paper is 80g/m^2 Evolve manufactured from 100 percent. recycled paper with a minimum 75 percent. post consumer waste. Envelopes are normally 80 percent. to 100 percent. recycled with at least 60 percent. to 85 percent. being post consumer waste.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Diamorphine Prescriptions

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drug addicts were prescribed diamorphine in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by health board or trust. [21166]

Mr. Woodward: No drug addicts were prescribed diamorphine for the treatment of their addiction in the last five years in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have licences to prescribe diamorphine. [21167]

Mr. Woodward: General Practitioners, and other medical practitioners, are not required to have a licence to prescribe diamorphine for the purposes of relieving

pain from organic disease or injury. However, a licence is required to prescribe, administer or supply diamorphine in the treatment of drug addiction. No such licences have been issued in Northern Ireland.

Disability Living Allowance

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland *(a)* claimed and *(b)* received disability living allowance payments in each of the last five years. [21643]

Mr. Hanson: The figures requested are shown in the table.

	Claims Received	*Claims Awarded*
2000–2001	23,072	14,628
2001–2002	23,604	13,703
2002–2003	23,770	12,940
2003–2004	23,409	15,668
2004–2005	22,733	11,773

Dispersal Orders

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dispersal orders have been made under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in Northern Ireland. [21359]

Mr. Hanson: The provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 extend only to England and Wales. Dispersal orders are not provided for in Northern Ireland legislation.

Doctors

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many doctors in Northern Ireland are unemployed; and how many vacancies there are for doctors in the NHS. [21644]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of unemployed doctors in the NHS is not available.

Information on the number of vacancies for doctors in the NHS is provided as follows.

Number of current and long-term vacancies for doctors by grade in the NI HPSS as at 31 March 2005

	Current		*Long-term*	
Grade	*Headcount*	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*
Consultant	83	80.90	67	65.50
Associate Specialist	1	0.50	0	0.00
Staff Grade	30	29.00	16	16.00
PRHO	14	14.00	0	0.00
SHO	79	79.00	0	0.00
Medical Officer	6	0.93	1	0.20
Total	213	204.33	84	81.70

Notes:

1. General Practitioner vacancies are not included in the table as the concept of a General Practitioner vacancy no longer exists under the new General Medical Services (GMS) contract. In the case of a single-handed practice, if the General Practitioner retires, resigns or is not available to practice the Primary Care Organisation (PCO) has an obligation to ensure that services are provided through contract with a new or existing provider.
2. A current vacancy is an unoccupied post which at 31 March 2005 was vacant and which the organisation was trying to fill. A long-term vacancy is an unoccupied post which at 31 March 2005 had been vacant for three months or more, and which the organisation was actively trying to fill.
3. WTE: Whole-Time Equivalent.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Domestic Violence

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government plan to take to increase protection for victims of domestic violence. [21623]

Mr. Hanson: On 10 October 2005 I launched the Northern Ireland regional strategy and accompanying action plan "Tackling Violence at Home". The strategy sets out the Government's long-term commitment to address the serious problem of domestic violence and abuse.

A key aim of the strategy is to improve services and support for all victims of domestic violence and to advise victims about these services. The action plan accompanying the strategy sets out in more detail our specific plans, but these include media campaigns to encourage more victims to report incidences of domestic violence, informing victims about the remedies available to them under both the civil and criminal law and having criminal justice agencies to publish and implement victim policies.

These initiatives build on a number of other recent important protections introduced through legislation. Under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, the PSNI can now arrest persons for common assault offences. In addition, from 15 November, the maximum penalty in respect of a breach of a protective order will be increased from three to six months imprisonment.

Finally, by March 2006, we propose to produce guidelines for issue to all Northern Ireland hon. Members and Members of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly both to raise awareness but also to provide them with information and advice about how to handle approaches from victims.

Driving Licences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have *(a)* a full driving licence and *(b)* a provisional driving licence in Northern Ireland. [19559]

Angela E. Smith: At 18 October 2005 there were 893,867 holders of a current full driving licence and 138,721 holders of a current provisional licence in Northern Ireland.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women over the age of 70 years hold driving licences in Northern Ireland. [21648]

Angela E. Smith: At 24 October 2005 there are 27,373 females and 45,690 males, aged 70 or over, who hold either a provisional or full current driving licence.

EAL

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will meet teachers of English as an Additional Language (EAL) to discuss the development of an EAL policy for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [20638]

Angela E. Smith: Neither the Secretary of State, nor myself have received any formal requests to meet with teachers of English as an Additional Language (EAL).

My Department has recognised the need for a policy for children who have English as an additional or second language and who have significant difficulties with English. At present officials are in the early stages of developing a policy, which should be in place during 2006. In the interim, work is under way to bring about early improvements to the current provision.

During the policy development, there will be full ad meaningful consultation with all interested parties including teachers of English as an additional language. It would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State to meet with teachers at this stage, as they will have the opportunity to contribute to the formulation of a EAL policy during the consultation process.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many education and library boards have yet to submit finalised accounts for the 2004–05 financial year. [21233]

Angela E. Smith: All five boards have submitted their accounts for the 2004–05 financial year to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and the Department.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance is given to education and library boards in respect of bills received after the end of the financial year that occurred during that year. [21729]

Angela E. Smith: The Department expects the board to account for bills received after the end of the financial year that occurred during that year in accordance with standard resource accounting best practice and to prepare their accounts as set out in the Accounts Direction issued to them on 22 July 2004 and in Government Accounting Northern Ireland (GANI).

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how long after the financial year has ended education boards are required to adjust accounts for payments incurred in that financial year. [21730]

Angela E. Smith: Education and Library Boards are required to submit their annual accounts to the Department and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C and AG) by 30 June following the end of the financial year. The accounts are then subject to audit. If any material errors are found during the course of the audit, the accounts may require adjustment up to the date of approval of the accounts by the accounting officer and the C and AG.

Electoral Fraud

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many successful prosecutions were made against heads of household for electoral fraud in each of the past 20 years. [20148]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply

Information on heads of household is not available. However, information on various electoral fraud offences from 1994 to 2003 (the most recent year for which figures are available) is set out in the following table. In addition we are aware of the following prosecutions which relate to electoral matters even though they were made under other provisions, such as forgery or conspiracy to defraud. The cases include; Hackney where two councillors were imprisoned in 2001 for three years each for registering electors falsely. In Blackburn, a Labour councillor pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the returning officer. He was sentenced to three years and seven months on 8 April 2005. In Guildford, a former Conservative councillor was jailed for four months in April 2004 for forging ballot papers in a local election. Data on whether any of those individuals prosecuted were heads of households is not collected.

Persons[1] proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts of various fraud related offences under the Representation of the People Act 1983, England and Wales 1994 to 2003[2]

	Offence description[3]	
	Persons proceeded against	*Persons found guilty*
1994	1	2
1995	12	14
1996	0	0
1997	9	5
1998	7	6
1999	3	5
2000[4]	2	1
2001	16	10
2002	1	1
2003	0	0

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Convictions do not necessarily occur in the same year that proceedings are initiated.
[3] Tampering with nomination and ballot papers etc, making false declarations as to election expenses, bribery, treating, undue influence and personation offences.
[4] Excluding any cases in Staffordshire.

Fire Fatalities

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fatalities in Northern Ireland have been attributed to fires in each of the past five years. [21616]

Mr. Woodward: The number of accidental fire deaths in each of the last five years is as follows:

From 1 April to 31 March each year	*Number of persons*
2001–01	10
2001–02	14
2002–03	10
2003–04	10
2004–05	8

Football Banning Orders

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many football supporters in Northern Ireland are subject to football banning orders preventing travel to football matches outside the UK. [20529]

Mr. Hanson: Football banning orders are not available to the courts in Northern Ireland, though I am currently considering their adoption in this jurisdiction.

Global Point

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the first buildings to be erected at Global Point, Newtownabbey. [21362]

Angela E. Smith: Further development at Global Point, including erection of the first buildings, is not expected until after the public inquiry into the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan is completed.

Green Ministers

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what *(a)* work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in the last three months and *(b)* meetings the Green Minister has attended in the last 12 months in his official capacity within that role; [18441]

(2) if he will list the meetings his officials have attended concerning the delivery of sustainable development across Government as co-ordinated by the Ministerial Sub-committee of Green Ministers. [18442]

Angela E. Smith: The Minister of State (Lord Rooker) became a member of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in Government (EE (SD)) in June 2005.

Although the Government publish the title, membership and terms of reference of cabinet committees, it has been the practice of successive governments not to disclose details of their proceedings.

Over the last three months the Minister has presided over the development of the emerging NI sustainable development strategy. He has attended many meetings and events where he has been pro-active in making the linkages to and promoting the principles of sustainable development.

For example, he hosted a reception for NI environmental NGO's where the issue of sustainable development was a key feature of his speech, he spoke at the Goldin Waste Fair to promote business opportunities in the recycling sector, and last month, when he was unable to attend a Consumer Council event on sustainable consumerism, he recorded a DVD to be used as an introduction to the conference.

Because of its cross-cutting nature, sustainable development is a consideration in most meetings attended by DOE officials. Officials have been engaging with key stakeholders in the business, community and voluntary sectors along with central and local government colleagues in progressing the forthcoming strategy due for launch on 13 December 2005.

Health Expenditure

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the health expenditure per head of population in Northern Ireland has been in each year since 2000. [21628]

Mr. Woodward: The public expenditure on health per head of population in the province for the last five financial years was as follows:

£

	Expenditure per head of population
2000–01	1,030
2001–02	1,109
2002–03	1,231
2003–04	1,367
2004–05	1,447

Household Insurance

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of households in each region were without household insurance in the most recent year for which figures are available ranked in descending order. [21182]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not available.

Illegal Waste

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of illegal cross-border waste disposal have been identified in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21738]

Angela E. Smith: Since the Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service took on responsibility for the regulation of illegal waste activity in October 2002, approximately 53 illegal waste disposal sites containing waste from the Republic of Ireland have been detected in Northern Ireland and investigated by the Environment and Heritage Service. There was one site detected in 2002, 32 sites in 2003, 17 sites in 2004 and three in 2005. There are no records for 2001.

The Environment and Heritage Service will continue to search for other sites concealed in remote locations and rigorously apply the law.

Incapacity Benefit

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland claimed incapacity benefits in each of the last five years. [21642]

Mr. Hanson: The figures requested are shown in the following table.

Financial year	*Claims*
2000–01	40,681
2001–02	39,675
2002–03	38,716
2003–04	35,967
2004–05	33,973

Looked After Children

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were in public care in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by age and sex. [21170]

Mr. Woodward: The DHSSPS collects information annually on the numbers of children looked after by Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland at 31 March.

For the last five years for which information is available, the numbers of children looked after in Northern Ireland is detailed in Table 1, and by age and sex in Table 2.

Table 1: Children looked after in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2000–04

	Number
2000	2,422
2001	2,414
2002	2,453
2003	2,446
2004	2,510

Table 2: Numbers of children looked after in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2000 to 2004 by age group and sex

Age Group (years)	*2000*		*2001*		*2002*		*2003*		*2004*	
	Boys	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
<1	33	27	32	26	35	22	24	37	34	40
1–4	174	174	177	191	191	189	171	173	173	175
5–11	450	421	459	419	470	395	457	415	462	419
12–15	389	338	363	347	375	365	394	344	428	347
16+	202	204	222	208	208	221	202	210	198	215
Total	1,248	1,174	1,245	1,169	1,262	1,191	1,270	1,176	1,314	1,196

Low Birth Weight Babies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many low birth weighte babies there were in each region in the most recent year in which figures are available expressed as *(a)* a percentage of all births and *(b)* the number ranked in descending order. [21186]

Mr. Woodward: The number of low birth weight babies that were born within each Health Board for 2004–05 is shown in the following table.

Health Board	*(a) Percentage of all births*	*(b) Number of low birth weight babies*
Eastern	6.68	543
Northern	5.96	342
Southern	6.04	291
Western	5.37	203
Northern Ireland	6.14	1,379

Notes:

1. All births and low birth weight births include live and still.
2. A low birth weight baby is regarded as weighing less than 2,500 grams.

Source:

Child Health System (CHS)

Lupus

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were diagnosed with lupus in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years. [22327]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of individuals diagnosed with lupus in Northern Ireland is not available. Information is available on the number of sufferers admitted to hospital.

The following table shows the number of admissions[1] to hospital in Northern Ireland, in each of the last five years, where the patients' primary diagnosis was lupus erythematosus or systematic lupus erythematosus.

	Lupus erythematosus	*Systematic lupus erythematosus*	*Total Admissions[1] with a primary diagnosis of lupus*
2000–01	19	197	216
2001–02	30	174	204
2002–03	12	249	261
2003–04	23	221	244
2004–05	25	214	239

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

Source:

Hospital inpatients system

M2

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to alleviate congestion on the M2 out of Sandyknowles. [21361]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm Mckibbin to Dr. William McCrea dated 27 October 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a parliamentary question about "what steps he is taking to alleviate congestion on the M2 out of Sandyknowes". I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service plans to widen the Belfast-bound carriageway of the M2 motorway to create an additional lane between the Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions. This will make it easier for traffic to join the M2 from the Sandyknowes junction, particularly during the morning peak traffic, and also provide greater capacity on the Belfast-bound section of the M2 towards Greencastle. Construction of these improvements on the M2 is expected to start during 2008.

The £30 million M2 Widening Scheme is one of three schemes forming part of the £100 million Roads Service Design, Build, Finance and Operate Package 1, along with the M1/Westlink Project and the Antrim Hospital slip roads.

I can also advise that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan proposes modifications to the Sandyknowes roundabout to minimise conflicts between different traffic movements and afford greater priority to the strategic M2 and A8 movements. Roads Service is currently investigating various design options.

I hope this information is helpful.

NHS Equipment

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate has been made of the cost to the NHS of the failure to return equipment loaned to patients in the last two years. [21358]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Northern Bank Robbery

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of whether the Provisional IRA carried out the Northern Bank robbery. [21830]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable has publicly stated that in his professional opinion, and based on the intelligence to hand, responsibility for the Northern Bank robbery must be attributed to the Provisional IRA. That is still his view.

The Government fully accepts the Chief Constable's judgment which was further endorsed by the Independent Monitoring Commission in its report of 10 February 2005.

Orthodontics

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what orthodontic treatment is available on the NHS to the people of Northern Ireland; and what the charges are for each type of treatment. [21363]

Mr. Woodward: Health service orthodontic treatment is available to everyone here on the basis of clinical need. Most treatment is given following a referral from a general dental practitioner to a specialist orthodontist or a practitioner with orthodontic experience. The fees for each type of treatment are as follows:

Intra-oral appliances

£

Appliance	*Patient charge per appliance*
Removable spring and/or screw type appliance	87.80
Simple fixed type appliance	84.20
Fixed multiband or multibracket appliance	246.24
Functional appliance	151.00
Bite plane appliance	64.44
Additional fee for extra-oral traction or anchorage reinforcement, where necessary	
Extra-oral traction	35.84
Anchorage reinforcement	35.84

Retention

£

	Charge
(1) Supervision of retention for a period of not less than 5 complete calendar months	
Per course of treatment	22.24
Per additional period[1]	11.16
(2) Retention appliance[2] (fee per appliance)	
Removable retainer in acrylic resin	43.40
Fixed or bonded retainer	49.48
Removable pressure formed retainer	35.20

[1] Additional fee for each further period of supervision of not less than two complete calendar months, normally subject to a maximum of two such periods.
[2] Normally only one removable or one fixed retainer per arch and only provided after active appliance treatment.

Repairs to orthodontic appliances

No charge.

Additions to or inclusions in orthodontic appliances of an artificial tooth to replace a missing natural tooth

£

Addition or inclusion of an artificial tooth (including any associated gum)	*Charge for each tooth*
To a fixed appliance or fixed retainer	9.60
To a removable appliance or removable retainer	14.24

Replacement of appliances lost or damaged beyond repair

£

Appliance	*Cost per appliance*
Space maintainer or retention appliance	34.60
Removable spring and/or screw type appliance	47.08
Simple fixed type appliance	48.24
Fixed multiband or multibracket appliance	90.36
Functional appliance	55.72

Any other orthodontic treatment

Such fee as the Dental Committee of the Central Services Agency may determine

Planning

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will publish the draft retail planning policy document; and what assessment he has made of the effects of the delay in its publication. [21639]

Angela E. Smith: The Minister of State for Northern Ireland with responsibility for planning (Lord Rooker) issued a press release on 18 August announcing that he would be monitoring developments of a major retail development application at Sprucefield in deciding the timing and content of draft PPS 5.

There is on going assessment of the impact of the delay in publishing draft PPS 5.

Police Transport

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* cars, *(b)* vans, *(c)* motor cycles and *(d)* bicycles are operated in each police division in Northern Ireland. [21632]

Mr. Woodward: The total number of vehicles allocated to District Command Units is listed as follows. For operational security reasons it is not possible to disclose the types and number of motor vehicles within each DCU. A breakdown of bicycles by DCU has been provided on a separate table.

Type of vehicle	*Total number*
Cars	712
Landrovers	70
Vans	81
Motorcycles	56
Bicycles	69

DCU	*Quantity of bicycles*	*Station*
Antrim	2	Antrim
Ards	2	Newtownards
Armagh	2	Gough Barracks
	2	Armagh
Ballymena	3	Ballymena
Ballymoney	2	Ballymoney
Banbridge	2	Banbridge
Carrickfergus	2	Carrickfergus
Castlereagh	2	Castlereagh
Coleraine	2	Coleraine
Cookstown	2	Cookstown
Dungannon	2	Dungannon
East Belfast	2	Strandtown
Fermanagh	2	Enniskillen
Foyle	2	Strand Road
Larne	2	Larne
Limavady	2	Limavady
Lisburn	2	Lisburn
Craigavon	2	Portadown
	2	Lurgan
Magherafelt	2	Magherafelt
Moyle	2	Ballycastle
Newry and Mourne	2	Ardmore
Newtownabbey	4	Newtownabbey
North Belfast	4	Antrim Road
North Down	2	Bangor
Omagh	2	Omagh
South Belfast	2	Musgrave Street
	4	Ballynafeigh
	2	Lisburn Road
Strabane	2	Strabane
Total bicycles on issue	69	

Prisoner Releases

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners were released on temporary licence in the last year for which figures are available; on how many occasions; for what purpose; and on how many of these occasions the prisoner *(a)* failed to return and *(b)* otherwise breached the conditions of the licence. [21240]

Mr. Woodward: 3127 periods of temporary release were granted from prisons, including the young offenders centre, during the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. Of this number of releases, four prisoners are currently unlawfully at large. The level of abuse of Prison Service schemes is small and to restrict temporary release would have a serious detrimental effect on the resettlement of prisoners, the great majority of whom abide by the temporary release conditions.

The full information requested is not available due to disproportionate cost, including those cases where a prisoner has been granted multiple releases and the number of prisoners who breach the conditions of their temporary releases other than those unlawfully at large.

Information in respect of those who were temporarily or still unlawfully at large is provided in the table.

Purpose of Temporary Release	*Total Release*	*Unlawfully at Large (UAL)*
Home Leave[1]	2,030	37
Home Leave[2]	69	0
Resettlement Leave[1]	732	0
Resettlement Leave[2]	100	0
Compassionate Temporary Release[1]	49	6
Compassionate Temporary Release[2]	11	0
Home Visits	13	0
Home Leave at Christmas	102	3
Hospital appointments[1]	21	0
Total number of releases under Rule 27	3,127	[3]46

[1] Unaccompanied
[2] Accompanied
[3] Of the 46 prisoners posted unlawfully at large, only four currently remain at large.
Note:
The table excludes prisoners on remand and those released on bail as these are determined by the courts.

Prisons

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of prison sentences in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004 were for (i) six months or less and (ii) three months or less. [21641]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the numbers of persons sentenced to immediate custody for six months or less, and for three months or less, and also presents these figures as a proportion of all persons sentenced to immediate custody in each of the calendar years 2001 to 2003.

Figures relating to 2004 are not currently available.

Persons sentenced to immediate custody[1] by sentence length: 2001–03

	2001		*2002*		*2003*	
	Number	*Proportion (percentage)*	*Number*	*Proportion (percentage)*	*Number*	*Proportion (percentage)*
Three months or less	574	34	594	32	607	28
Six months or less	1,222	72	1,283	70	1,394	65
Total number sentenced to immediate custody	1,706	—	1,828	—	2,155	—

[1] Immediate custody includes prison, young offenders' centre and custody probation. Persons sentenced to juvenile justice centre orders are excluded from the analysis.
Note:
Numbers for persons sentenced for three months or less are also included within 'six month or less' category. Percentages are therefore cumulative.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions people have been caught smuggling narcotics into prisons in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and how many people have been charged. [21245]

Mr. Woodward: Detailed recording of monthly drugs monitoring statistics was introduced in March 2003 with information now being recorded on where drugs are found within each prison establishment. Since then records show that a total of 445 visitors have been caught attempting to smuggle unauthorised drugs into prison establishments.

	Number of people found in possession of unauthorised drugs
2003–04	157
2004–05	236
2005-to date	52

Statistics showing the number of visitors charged with drug trafficking into prison establishments are not separately recorded.

Figures prior to these dates are not available.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were caught with narcotics while serving prison sentences in each of the last 10 years. [21247]

Mr. Woodward: Detailed recording of monthly drugs monitoring statistics was introduced in March 2003 including information on where drugs are found within each prison establishment. Since then records show that a total of 693 prisoners were found to be in possession of unauthorised drugs and pharmaceuticals, including those which were not prescribed for that individual.

	Number of prisoners found in possession of unauthorised drugs
2003–04	296
2004–05	273
2005 to date	124

Figures prior to these dates are not available.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from his Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20132]

Mr. Hain: The information requested is not collected.

Pupil-teacher Ratio

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the pupil/teacher ratio was in Northern Ireland's *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* grammar schools in each of the past four years. [22332]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupil teacher ratios in Northern Ireland schools

	Primary schools	*Grammar preparatory departments*	*Secondary schools*	*Grammar schools*
2001–02	19.9	16.9	13.8	15.3
2002–03	19.7	17.2	13.8	15.3
2003–04[1]	20.0	17.0	14.1	15.2
2004–05	20.0	17.3	13.8	15.2

[1] Since 2003–04 the teacher figures used to calculate pupil: teacher ratios for primary and secondary schools have been compiled on a new improved basis, which involves verification with schools. Data since 2003–04 are not comparable with data prior to 2003–04.

Rented Accommodation

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much private sector rented accommodation is available in Northern Ireland, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [21649]

Mr. Hanson: Information is collected on a district council rather than on a constituency basis. The most recent data currently available, from the housing executive's house condition survey 2001, is as follows:

District council area	*Number of private rented sector properties*
Antrim	1,400
Ards	2,780
Armagh	900
Ballymena	1,650
Ballymoney	500
Banbridge	610
Belfast	12,970
Carrickfergus	680
Castlereagh	1,130
Coleraine	2,320
Cookstown	840
Craigavon	1,850
Derry	2,690
Down	1,600
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1,780
Fermanagh	1,520
Larne	850
Limavady	1,110
Lisburn	3,010
Magherafelt	720
Moyle	630
Newry and Mourne	2,080
Newtownabbey	1,330
North Down	2,420
Omagh	1,220
Strabane	810

Road Safety

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what advertising campaigns relating to *(a)* drink driving and *(b)* speed reduction have been planned for the Christmas and new year periods in Northern Ireland. [21646]

Angela E. Smith: It is planned to run an anti-drink-drive advertising campaign from 23 November 2005 to 1 January 2006 as research, which is used to target government's road safety campaigns to when they are most effective, indicates that there are raised dangers resulting from drink driving over the Christmas and new year period.

There are no plans to run an anti speeding campaign over the Christmas/new year period because research shows that June and October are the peak periods for speed related road traffic collisions.

Road Tax Detection

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been caught by road tax detection devices in each of the last three years. [19451]

Angela E. Smith: On-the-road detection of vehicle excise duty evasion is undertaken by the PSNI, traffic wardens and through Driver and Vehicle Licensing's (DVLNI) Automated Number Plate Readers (ANPRs).

Figures for ANPR detection in the last three years are 2002–03—5,501, 2003–04—6,024 and 2004–05—12,543.

School Buses

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will seek to legislate to limit the number of pupils travelling on school buses to the number of seats fitted on each bus. [21617]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment is currently considering in detail the implications of implementing such a proposal in its assessment of the four key recommendations of the Northern Ireland Assembly's home to school transport public inquiry. It is expected that the findings of this work, which is being carried out in partnership with the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Education, will be published later this year. No decisions on the way forward will be made until this assessment is complete.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on seat belts in school buses. [21618]

Angela E. Smith: Education and Library Boards are providing a range of measures to improve the safety of their bus fleets. 65 per cent. of Board buses now have seat belts fitted compared with 47.5 per cent. in 2001. In all new Board vehicles, seatbelts are fitted as standard. The Department of Education has also provided Boards with funding of £4.25 million this year to replace existing school buses which have passed their replacement date. A further £1.4 million was made available to purchase additional Board vehicles to cover bus routes which are currently serviced by more expensive operators.

The Department of the Environment is also currently considering in detail the implications of the provision of seat belts in all school buses in its assessment of the four key recommendations of the Northern Ireland Assembly's home to school transport public inquiry. It is expected that the findings of this work, which is being carried out in partnership with the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Education, will be published later this year. No decisions on the way forward will be made until this assessment is complete.

Secondary Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications there have been to open integrated *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Northern Ireland this year; and what the requirements for additional (i) primary and (ii) secondary school places were in the areas where applications for schools were made. [19945]

Angela E. Smith: To date this year the Department of Education has received three applications in relation to integrated primary schools—for awarding grant-maintained integrated (GMI) status to Lir Integrated Primary School in Ballycastle (currently operating independently) and for the establishment of two new GMI primary schools one in the Moira/Hillsborough area and one in the Clogher Valley area. There has been one post-primary application—for a new GMI school in the Saintfield/Carryduff area. These are recently published proposals which are still subject to public consultation and therefore no decisions have yet been made on them.

There is a statutory duty on the Department to encourage and facilitate integrated education and to respond to parental demand for integrated education. In making an assessment of each proposal he Department will consider a number of factors including the projected enrolments of the proposed schools and the pupil population in the surrounding area.

Social Workers

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many social workers have been recruited in each trust area in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21629]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of social workers recruited by HSS Trusts is not available. However, figures detailing the number of Social Services staff that have joined the HPSS in each of the last five years are given in the following tables. These figures include qualified social work staff and other social care staff such as day centre and unqualified residential workers (the figures do not include domiciliary workers or home helps). It has not been possible to provide a specific breakdown of the Social Services staff due to the complexity of the grade codes and the recent change in the title protection of the term 'Social Worker'.

Number of social service staff joining the NI HPSS by HPSS organisation in each of the last five years (headcount)

Trust	March 2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	1	1	0	0	0
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	12	24	17	21	27
Causeway HSS Trust	20	17	17	17	20
Craigavon & Banbridge Community HSS Trust	32	27	31	30	35
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	2	0	1	3	1
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	31	41	47	49	44
Foyle Community HSS Trust	36	43	44	37	48
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	37	34	43	59	55
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	20	19	21	21	26
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	56	41	95	85	101
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	32	29	39	43	47
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	29	13	26	37	30
Ulster Community & Hospitals Group HSS Trust	51	24	39	46	49
Eastern Board HQ	0	0	3	1	1
Southern Board HQ	1	0	0	1	1
Western Board HQ	0	0	0	1	0
NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency	3	2	0	1	0
NI Social Care Council	0	6	0	1	0
Total	363	321	423	453	485

Source:
Human Resource Management Systems

Number of social service staff joining the NI HPSS by HPSS organisation in each of the last five years (WTE)

Trust	March 2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	0.90	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.00
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	12.00	22.60	15.30	19.95	25.55
Causeway HSS Trust	19.05	16.05	14.96	15.55	17.02
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	29.49	24.68	28.14	25.81	31.44
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	2.00	0.00	1.00	2.50	1.00
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	27.02	37.10	41.85	43.93	41.63
Foyle Community HSS Trust	33.32	35.60	36.87	32.62	43.23
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	34.40	31.97	39.22	55.82	53.70
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	17.79	18.03	20.23	18.25	23.35
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	48.71	38.96	88.45	77.81	95.30
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	31.35	27.52	35.84	39.97	42.97
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	27.05	12.35	25.67	35.51	29.11
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	46.77	21.42	36.55	42.85	43.59
Eastern Board HQ	0.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Southern Board HQ	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00
Western Board HQ	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.61	0.00
NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency	2.76	1.67	0.00	1.00	0.00
NI Social Care Council	0.00	6.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Total	333.61	294.85	387.08	415.18	449.89

Source:
Human Resource Management Systems

Special Schools

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average funding per pupil was for children in special schools in each of the last five years, broken down by education board. [19525]

Angela E. Smith: The average cost for educational provision per pupil in special schools within the individual Board areas, broken down by Education and Library Board in the period 2000–01 to 2004–05 is as follows:

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
2000–01	12,230,524	8,936,181	11,509,228	3,796,744	7,633,185	44,105,862
Pupil numbers	1,381	965	1,283	331	825	4,785
Average cost (£)	8,856	9,260	8,970	11,471	9,252	9,217
2001–02	12,939,594	9,489,591	12,362,702	4,562,114	8,297,648	47,651,649
Pupil numbers	1,387	981	1,311	373	795	4,847
Average cost (£)	9,329	9,673	9,429	12,231	10,437	9,831
2002–03	13,613,289	10,298,289	13,661,247	4,849,254	8,352,425	50,774,504
Pupil numbers	1,370	976	1,280	383	791	4,800
Average cost (£)	9,937	10,551	10,672	12,661.24	10,559	10,578

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	Total
2003–04	15,124,865	11,913,187	15,176,546	4,854,451	9,000,538	54,957,587
Pupil numbers	1,368	1,000	1,289	386	802	4,845
Average cost (£)	11,056	11,913	11,773	12,576	11,222	11,343
2004–05	15,033,941	11,091,753	14,624,597	5,535,736	9,355,824	54,529,851
Pupil numbers	1,365	1,000	1,257	391	788	4,801
Average cost (£)	11,013	11,092	11,634	14,158	11,873	11,358

The Southern Education and Library Board only has special schools for children with Severe Learning Difficulties.

The other four Boards have schools for children with both Moderate and Severe Learning Difficulties. This would largely account for the higher average cost for Southern Education and Library Board special schools.

Suicides

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides there were in each region in the most recent year for which figures are available by young people aged 15 to 24, broken down by sex and expressed as *(a)* a percentage of all suicides and *(b)* the number ranked in descending order. [21183]

Angela E. Smith: The following tables give the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for 2004 due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'[1] or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'[2] by local government district, sex and age-group. Mortality data for the 2004 registration year are provisional until the publication of the Annual Report of the Registrar General in autumn 2005.

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2

Number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2004 due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' for males aged 15–24 by local government district

Local government district	Male deaths due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted" (2004) Aged 15–24	All ages	Percentage
Belfast	7	21	33
Ballymena	2	4	50
Newry and Mourne	1	9	11
Craigavon	1	8	13
Banbridge	1	5	20
Derry	1	5	20
Omagh	1	4	25
Cookstown	1	3	33
Ballymoney	1	2	50
Coleraine	1	2	50
Limavady	1	2	50
Strabane	1	2	50
Ards	0	6	0
Armagh	0	5	0
Lisburn	0	5	0
Antrim	0	3	0
Down	0	3	0
Fermanagh	0	3	0
Larne	0	3	0

Number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2004 due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' for males aged 15–24 by local government district

Local government district	Male deaths due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted" (2004) Aged 15–24	All ages	Percentage
Newtownabbey	0	3	0
North Down	0	3	0
Castlereagh	0	2	0
Dungannon	0	1	0
Magherafelt	0	1	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	—
Moyle	0	0	—
Northern Ireland	19	105	18

Number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2004 due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' for females aged 15–24 by local government district

Local government district	Female deaths due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted" (2004) Aged 15–24	All ages	Percentage
Belfast	3	11	27
Derry	1	6	77
Strabane	1	1	100
Fermanagh	0	4	0
Ards	0	3	0
Ballymena	0	2	0
Castlereagh	0	2	0
Down	0	2	0
Lisburn	0	2	0
Antrim	0	1	0
Coleraine	0	1	0
Craigavon	0	1	0
Dungannon	0	1	0
Limavady	0	1	0
Newtownabbey	0	1	0
North Down	0	1	0
Omagh	0	1	0
Armagh	0	0	—
Ballymoney	0	0	—
Banbridge	0	0	—
Carrickfergus	0	0	—
Cookstown	0	0	—
Larne	0	0	—
Magherafelt	0	0	—
Moyle	0	0	—
Newry and Mourne	0	0	—
Northern Ireland	5	41	12

Surplus School Places

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library details of the methodology used by the Department of Education Northern Ireland to determine the number of surplus places in schools. [21503]

Angela E. Smith: The calculation of surplus places in post-primary schools, is based on the enrolment which can be accommodated by the total physical capacity of teaching spaces less the actual number of pupils attending.

For primary schools, the methodology is based on the schedules of accommodation in the Department of Education Building Handbook for Primary Schools, which uses enrolment bands to determine the number of classrooms that a school should have eg the enrolment band for a seven classroom school is in the range 176–205 pupils. Many primary schools have a number of classrooms which are not used for teaching purposes and therefore to make some allowance for these non-teaching classrooms, the methodology for calculating surplus places has deemed the capacity of each primary school to be the lower end of the enrolment band. The actual enrolment is subtracted from this to produce an estimate of the surplus places.

I have arranged for this information to be placed in the Library.

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been identified as the most significant sustainable development impacts in relation to the operation of his Department's estate. [18439]

Mr. Hain: The Department has established a comprehensive programme to deliver its sustainable development strategy. Key to that programme has been the establishment of a network of 'Green Champions' across the Department. This is a group of committed and enthusiastic individuals who collectively are driving forward the message of reduce, reuse and recycle in relation to the operation and management of the Department's estate.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the devolved administration.

Tor Bank Special School

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress with completion of capital works at Tor Bank Special school in Dundonald; how the amount of finance allocated by the Department of Education for this project was calculated; when this finance was allocated; and how much remains unspent. [21371]

Angela E. Smith: It is expected that the invitation to negotiate for this public private partnership project (PPP) will issue to bidders before Christmas and that construction will start in the latter part of 2006. The estimated capital value of this project was calculated on the basis of construction, fees and furniture and equipment. As with all PPP projects, no financial allocation will be made until after a preferred bidder is appointed and the Department has approved the full business case. This is because thecunitary payment, which will be paid for the duration of the contract, does not commence until thecschool becomes operational.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the replacement of Tor Bank special needs school is expected to commence; and if he will make a statement. [21199]

Angela E. Smith: Tor Bank special school was announced in 2002 as part of a public-private partnership cluster along with Lagan college. It is anticipated that the invitation to negotiate will issue to bidders for this project before the end of the year and that construction would start in the latter part of 2006.

Waste Management

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of *(a)* the performance of each council in Northern Ireland in waste management and *(b)* whether they are on course to meet their recycling targets. [21360]

Angela E. Smith: The Department reviews the annual performance reports submitted by the three district council waste management groups. The annual performance reports for 2004–05 will be reviewed and reported on in December 2005. This review will include an assessment of whether the district councils are on course to meet their targets. It is anticipated that not all district councils will meet the 25 per cent. recycling target for household waste in 2005–06. However, it is expected that most district councils will achieve a rate of at least 20 per cent. recycling of household waste.

Workplace Violence

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees in local government have been victims of offences of violence at work in each of the last five years. [21635]

Angela E. Smith: Statistics on instances of employees in local government who have been victims of offences of violence at work are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 31 October 2005

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many consultations the Highways Agency has had with residents affected by the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. [23536]

Dr. Ladyman: Public consultation took place between 19 November 2002 and 14 February 2003, which included a public exhibition held during December 2002.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans the Highways Agency has to consult residents affected by the proposed alterations to Northbridge Street in Robertsbridge, East Sussex as part of the proposed A21 upgrade; [23537]

(2) what representations he has received regarding plans to alter Northbridge Street, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, as part of the proposed A21 upgrade. [23545]

Dr. Ladyman: The Agency has received a petition signed by 69 residents outlining their concerns about the plans to alter Northbridge Street, and one letter from a local organisation suggesting an alternative solution.

The Highways Agency has written to the Chairman of the Hurst Green Parish Council asking him to act as the focal point for interested parties and has suggested that a meeting take place in mid November to discuss, among other issues, the proposed alterations to Northbridge Street.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Highways Agency on plans to consult members of the public affected by the proposed upgrade of the A21 between Flimwell and Robertsbridge. [23546]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has suggested a further meeting in mid-November with the Hurst Green Parish Council and local representatives to discuss the concerns that have been raised by the members of the public affected by the proposed upgrade.

A42

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason the A42 was closed on 17 August 2005; how long the closure was in force; and upon whose authority the closure was *(a)* instigated and *(b)* lifted. [22879]

Dr. Ladyman: The A42 was closed on 17 August as a result of an accident. A food delivery lorry crossed over the central reservation from the southbound to the northbound carriageway, damaging the central safety barrier. Both northbound lanes and lane two southbound were closed from 12 pm to allow for the removal of the vehicle and its perishable load and for barrier repair work to be carried out.

The southbound carriageway was fully reopened together with lane one northbound at 5.56 pm. The northbound carriageway was fully opened at 7.25 pm. The closure was instigated and subsequently lifted by Leicestershire police.

Airports (Security)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the adequacy of security arrangements at all airports for which his Department is responsible to take account of the threat level indicated by the recent London bombings, with particular reference to smaller airports; and if he will make a statement. [21990]

Ms Buck: Security arrangements at all airports in the National Aviation Security Programme, irrespective of size, are regularly reviewed in the light of all available information. UK airports have been operating an enhanced level of security since the attacks in the USA of 11 September 2001.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead East and Washington West constituency, the effects in Gateshead East and Washington West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22286]

Ms Buck: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Gateshead East and Washington West constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 280,840 in 2004, and the numbers of children aged less than 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 3,905 in 2004. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–67 to 42.4 billion in 2004–05, a rise of 32 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants, nitrous oxides and particles, fell by 38 per cent. and 21 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2003.

Capital funding for local transport in the Gateshead East and Washington West constituency is allocated to the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority and the local district councils. The funding allocated to the councils Tyne and Wear since 1997 is shown in the table below[1]. It has been for the local authorities to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

£ million

Tyne and Wear nature of funding	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Capital maintenance	6.058	7.822	8.646	10.839
Integrated block	5.349	8.391	7.925	16.509
Major schemes	6.138	6.651	24.61	16.992
Targeted bus grants[1]	1.34	0.44	0.65	0.54
Total	18.885	23.304	41.831	44.88

£ million

Tyne and Wear nature of funding	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Capital maintenance	11.518	9.433	16.990	14.379
Integrated block	17.146	13.252	16.245	17.072
Major schemes	22.545	22.0	22.427	16.396
Targeted bus grants[1]	1.53	2.43	0.13	0.13
Total	52.739	47.115	55.792	47.977

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding.

The total number of deaths and serious injuries on the roads in the Gateshead and Sunderland local authority areas reduced from a 1994–98 average of 134 and 162 to 85 and 121 in 2003 respectively. The number of children killed or seriously injured in the Gateshead and Sunderland local authority areas reduced from a 1994–98 average of 27 and 46 to 16 and 34 in 2003 respectively.

Passenger kilometres travelled on the Tyne and Wear metro have increased from 254 million in 1996–97 to 283 million in 2004–05. The system has increased the number of stations and stops served from 46 in 1996–97 to 58 in 2004–05, with the system being extended to Sunderland.

New Drivers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to require drivers in their first year of holding a full licence to be subject to *(a)* compulsory designation and *(b)* additional speed restrictions. [22489]

Dr. Ladyman: As part of the Road Safety Strategy, the Department consulted in 2002 on a number of options for improving the safety of new drivers, the majority of whom are safe and drive responsibly. The Government concluded that the skills needed to drive unaccompanied should be demonstrated at the time of the practical test. Proposals for a requirement to use a "P" (probationer) plate, and a limit on the maximum speed for new drivers, were not justified.

We believe that the way forward is to focus on ensuring that learners are better trained and that driver training services are of high quality.

The consultation document and decision letter are available on-line from the Department's website at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n=10204&l=21

Gloucester Parkways Station

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the status of the proposed Gloucester Parkways Station is. [23645]

Ms Buck: A bid for funding for the Gloucester Parkway scheme was received by the Department in July and is currently being assessed. Decisions on all new Major Scheme Bids will follow the receipt of views from the regional bodies on their priorities for transport schemes which are expected by the end of January 2006.

Heathrow (Third Runway)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a map of the flight paths that would be used by aircraft should the proposed third runway be built at Heathrow airport. [22849]

Ms Buck: The airspace arrangements to support a possible third runway at Heathrow are still being developed as part of the Project for the Sustainable Development of Heathrow. Illustrative work will be carried out to assess the likely impacts of a third runway, including noise impacts. Detailed design of flight paths will only follow if a decision in principle is reached to proceed with a third runway and would then be the subject of consultation.

Minimum Speed Limits

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to introduce minimum speed limits on *(a)* trunk roads and *(b)* motorways. [22880]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have no plans to introduce minimum speed limits on trunk roads or motorways.

Motorway Service Stations

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department last reviewed the regulations relating to motorway service station areas. [22680]

Dr. Ladyman: The regulations relating to motorway service areas were last reviewed in the spring of 1998, culminating in the statement to the House of Lords of July 1998 (HA269), which announced amendments to policy set out in the Department of Transport Roads Circular 1/94, 'Motorway Service Areas'. I have recently instigated a further review of roadside facilities for users of both motorways and all-purpose trunk roads. Discussions with key stakeholders are in progress. I have asked the Highways Agency to prepare a document for consultation early in 2006.

Off-road Cycling

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on off-road cycling; and if he will make a statement. [22274]

Derek Twigg: We encourage safe and responsible cycling, on or—where permitted—off the road network. Cycling is a healthy and environmentally friendly mode of transport which can help deliver a number of key Government objectives including reducing congestion and pollution and improving people's health and fitness.

Parking Offences (Decriminalisation)

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the

process by which power was transferred from the police to local authorities following the decriminalisation of parking offences; what steps he took to ensure that this was a smooth transition of authority; and if he will make a statement; [22882]

(2) what guidelines he has provided for local authorities to ensure the validity of penalty charge notices since the decriminalisation of parking offences; [23077]

(3) what assessment he has made of the management of parking offences by local authorities since decriminalisation of parking offences; and if he will make a statement. [23078]

Ms Buck: The Road Traffic Act 1991 provides for the decriminalisation of most non-endorseable on-street parking offences in London and allows similar arrangements to be introduced elsewhere. Research for the Department by the Transport Research Laboratory ("Special Parking Areas in London"; "The Special Parking Area in the District of Winchester"; and "The Special Parking Area in Oxford") showed that decriminalised parking enforcement provides local authorities with greater control over their enforcement activity and an enhanced ability to deliver their parking strategies. The Department partly funded the British Parking Association's recent review of decriminalised parking enforcement, which concluded that the existing system works well but that it would benefit from some modifications.

In 1995, the Secretary of State issued detailed guidance for local authorities in England outside of London on applying for, introducing and operating decriminalised parking enforcement. The guidance—local authority circular 1/95—makes clear that local authorities should liaise with the police to ensure a smooth and orderly transfer of responsibilities and that they should, therefore, continue to liaise with the police so that the two systems can operate effectively side-by-side. When applying for the power to enforce parking regulations, authorities have to submit detailed applications to the Department for Transport which need to confirm, among other things, that the authority will review its existing Traffic Regulation Orders, signs and road markings and use suitable documentation—including an appropriate penalty charge notice (PCN)—when enforcing contraventions. The appropriate police authority is asked whether it supports the application.

Circular 1/95 also makes it clear that the Government expect authorities to have regard to the minimum or common standards set out in that guidance. The information that must appear on a penalty charge notice is set out in the Road Traffic Act 1991. The Secretary of State's 1/95 guidance provides further suggestions about information that should be provided on penalty charge notices.

The Department is considering options for strengthening the existing system for the civil enforcement of parking contraventions while drafting regulations and guidance under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2005. We have established an expert working group to help us take this work forward and aim to carry out public consultation in spring 2006.

Road Accidents (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road *(a)* accidents and *(b)* fatalities there have been on the (i) A59 and (ii) M6 in Lancashire in each of the last 10 years. [21163]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of personal injury road accidents and the number of resultant fatalities on the A59 and M6 within the borders of Lancashire county council for the years 1995 to 2004 are shown in the following table.

	M6 in Lancashire		*A59 in Lancashire*	
	Personal injury accidents	*Fatalities*	*Personal injury accidents*	*Fatalities*
1995	139	6	210	5
1996	134	8	205	8
1997	249	5	192	8
1998	220	6	166	4
1999	202	6	185	4
2000	168	3	172	2
2001	143	4	188	3
2002	166	1	170	2
2003	160	6	134	0
2004	197	4	164	4

Speed Cameras

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* mobile and *(b)* fixed speed cameras in reducing speeding in North Shropshire. [22918]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department only holds information for the whole West Mercia area not broken down by district or camera type. Further detailed information will be available from the partnership and I have asked them to respond directly.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what impact *(a)* mobile and *(b)* fixed speed cameras have had on road accidents in West Mercia since they were introduced. [22919]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department only holds information for the whole West Mercia area not broken down by camera type. Further detailed information will be available from the partnership and I have asked them to respond directly.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the annual running costs were of the West Mercia Safety Camera Partnership for each year for which figures are available. [22915]

Dr. Ladyman: The Safety Camera Partnership in West Mercia joined the national safety camera programme in April 2003. During 2003-04, their running costs were £2,607,770 and during 2004-05 their running costs were £2,289,700.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport to what budget the funds raised by speeding fines not spent on running the West Mercia Safety Camera Partnership were applied in each of the years for which figures are available. [22916]

Dr. Ladyman: The Safety Camera Partnership in West Mercia joined the national safety camera programme in April 2003. Their running costs, amount of fines collected from fixed penalty fines and the resulting surplus were:

£

	Running costs	Amount collected from fixed penalty fines	Surplus
2003–04	2,607,770	3,086,160	478,390
2004–05	2,289,700	3,095,940	806,240

The surplus goes to the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the fines imposed by the West Mercia Safety Camera Partnership were for repeat offenders in the years for which figures are available. [22917]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not record or keep this information. Further detailed information will be available directly from the partnership and I have asked them to respond directly.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was raised in fines by the West Mercia Safety Camera Partnership by *(a)* mobile speed cameras, *(b)* fixed speed cameras and *(c)* in total in each year for which figures are available. [22920]

Dr. Ladyman: The Safety Camera Partnership in West Mercia joined the national safety camera programme in April 2003. The Department does not hold information broken down by type of camera. During 2003–04, fines collected from fixed penalties were £3,086,160 and during 2004–05 fines collected from fixed penalties were £3,095,940.

Supertram (Leeds)

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the Supertram scheme in Leeds by the end of October; and for what reasons his Department has not made an announcement previously; [23539]

(2) when he will reply to the letter from the leaders of Leeds city council concerning the Leeds Supertram scheme. [23540]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State made clear the position on the Supertram scheme in his oral statement last summer on 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 159. Since then we have been in discussions with West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive about their alternative proposals.

At a meeting with local council leaders on 26 July 2005, I asked for additional information on tram costs and for further work to be done on a top of the range bus option.

The Secretary of State's principal private secretary replied to Councillor Harris, leader of Leeds city council, on 27 October.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service

Paul Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he plans to allow recruitment of persons over 60 years of age to the civil service. [22394]

Mr. Hutton: The Civil Service Management Code does not prescribe any age restrictions for recruitment into the civil service. As an equal opportunities employer, the civil service is committed to ensure that all eligible people have equality of opportunity for employment based on their suitability for the work and that there must be no unfair discrimination on the basis of age.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many staff are employed by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman; [23582]

(2) what the budget is for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman in 2005–06. [23606]

Mr. Hutton: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's net resource budget for 2005–06 is £21.6 million. 263 full-time equivalent staff are currently employed in the offices of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

PRIME MINISTER

Queen's Ambulance Service Medal

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Prime Minister when he plans to announce the first Queen's Ambulance Service Medal award. [20414]

The Prime Minister: Her Majesty the Queen is advised by the "Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals" on all matters to do with honours and medals. Proposals for the institution of new medals are considered by this Committee before advice is offered to Her Majesty the Queen. No proposal has been submitted to the Committee.

Tibet

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Prime Minister if he will raise the issues of Tibet and human rights abuses with the Chinese President during his state visit in November. [22770]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton and Wanstead (Harry Cohen) at Prime Minister's questions on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 300.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal and Plant Diseases

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to prevent the import of *(a)* animal and *(b)* plant disease; and if she will make a statement. [20428]

Mr. Bradshaw: A comprehensive import regime exists in European Community law to ensure that animals and animal products imported from non EU countries do not pose a risk to animal or human health. They must come from approved countries and must be accompanied by official veterinary certification in a form specified in Community law. Animal products for human consumption must also come from approved establishments to ensure that they have been produced under hygienic conditions.

Imported animals and animal products must enter the EU at designated Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks. A number of animals from each consignment are physically checked and a proportion of consignments of animal products undergo physical checks. EU law lays down minimum levels for physical checks, which vary depending on the product. These checks are to ensure that import conditions are met.

Emergency safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of animals and meat from all, or parts, of the affected country, can be taken if there is an outbreak of disease in an exporting country likely to present a risk to human or animal health.

The import of products of animal origin by individual travellers in their personal luggage is judged to be a potential route by which animal disease could be introduced. Following pressure by the Government, new tighter EU rules governing these imports were introduced in 2003.

Action against illegal imports forms part of the overall Defra Animal Health and Welfare Strategy.

£25 million of new money has been made available over three years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to tackle illegal imports of products of animal origin (POAO) and plants and plant based goods (PBG) from third countries.

HM Revenue and Customs are the delivery agent with enforcement responsibility at the frontier for illegal imports of products of animal origin (POAO) and plant based goods (PBG) from countries outside the European Union.

Customs enforcement is based on risk. This includes information provided by Defra on the animal health disease situation around the world, including the risks from new disease outbreaks. Defra provide Customs with the 'map of the world' (informed by OIE) detailing animal health risks to assist Customs in deploying their resources according to risk.

Enforcement powers in relation to illegally imported live animals are the responsibility of the Trading Standards department of the relevant local authority. Defra is working in partnership with HMRC on this issue and they have been kept informed of developments. As a result Customs are being more vigilant. If they come across live animals in the course of their duties they will hand these over to the State Veterinary Service or local authority.

The importation from non-EU countries of animal pathogens and carriers is prohibited except under licence. Licences issued to authorise such imports impose conditions for their safe handling and disposal. Animal pathogens causing the most serious exotic diseases of livestock and poultry are strictly controlled under the Specified Animal Pathogens Order 1998 (SAPO). Specified animal pathogens may only be imported by those licensed to hold or work with them under SAPO. To be considered for licensing an establishment must meet the relevant Defra containment and operating requirements for the specified animal pathogen concerned and inspections are carried out to confirm this.

Imports from third countries of plants and most types of plant produce require a phytosanitary certificate issued by the plant health services in the country of origin stating that the consignment meets our plant health import rules. For movements within the EC, consignments of high risk plants must carry a "plant passport". Defra's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate carried out 10,128 check inspections of imports from non-EU countries last year, 29,884 inspections of plants and produce moving within the EU, and 32,617 inspections of plants susceptible to Phytophthora ramorum (the pathogen which causes Sudden Oak Death in California). Where potentially damaging pests or diseases or other evidence of non-compliance were found, proportionate actions were taken to deal with the immediate risk and to reduce the possibility of recurrence.

In order to improve the effectiveness of import controls and implement recent changes to the Plant Health Directive a further nine Plant Health Inspectors have been recruited this year to be based at major air and sea ports. The UK supported the recent adoption by the EC's Standing Committee on Plant Health of a risk targeting mechanism to determine appropriate rates of inspection for import trades depending on their compliance record. The UK also plays an active role in setting international standards for plant health controls and monitoring their implementation as well as ensuring that regulatory action on plant pests and diseases is based on good scientific evidence.

Defra recently published a plant health strategy to set out: objectives and priorities for protecting plant health in England; the relative roles of government and other stakeholders in delivery of these objectives; and how activities relevant to plant health (including research) of Defra, its executive agencies and other bodies should best be co-ordinated. The strategy represents part of Defra's response to the National Audit Office (NAO) and Public Accounts Committee (PAC) reports 'Protecting England and Wales from plant pests and diseases.'

Animal Welfare

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to introduce the Animal Welfare Bill. [19804]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Animal Welfare Bill had its First Reading in the House of Commons on 13 October.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what qualifications animal welfare inspectors will be required to have in order to carry out their duties under the Animal Welfare Bill; and whether such standards will be set at a national level. [22247]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The Animal Welfare Bill will not impose minimum qualifications for local authority inspectors.

However, local authorities will receive guidance and training from Defra on the new requirements to ensure that standards are as consistent as possible.

Avian Influenza

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the possible timescale for avian influenza spreading *(a)* through Continental Europe and *(b)* into the United Kingdom. [21596]

Mr. Bradshaw: The risk assessment that we have carried out on the spread of the avian influenza virus indicates that there is a high risk that the geographical spread will continue, given the recent detections of the virus in various geographical areas since May 2005.

On the evidence that is currently available it is reasonable to conclude that there is an increased risk that the virus may be introduced to the UK as a result of spread elsewhere.

The significant uncertainties associated with an analysis of this sort mean it is impossible to assign reliable time scale to any changes.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether each animal health office has appointed specialist vets among the State Veterinary Service to deal with potential outbreaks of avian influenza. [20760]

Mr. Bradshaw: Many vets in the SVS have considerable experience and expertise in poultry diseases including avian influenza. Furthermore, confirmation of disease is based on laboratory analysis and not clinical diagnosis in the field. The SVS has recently run a programme of training for veterinary officers to update them on dealing with a potential outbreak of avian influenza.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department plans to spend on avian influenza research in each of the next five years. [22862]

Mr. Bradshaw: The amount the Department invests into research activity on Avian Influenza (AI) will rise from £463,000 during 2005–06 to at least £545,000 during 2006–07.

This level may be an underestimate as further new research may be put in place related to questions arising as a result of the current spread of AI.

Because of this it is not possible to give absolute figures for the next five financial years. Other than to state that the level of funding will at least be maintained.

Biosecurity

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the advice offered by her Department to owners of equine animals which travel abroad with regard to *(a)* avian influenza and *(b)* West Nile fever. [20764]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not offer advice to owners of equine animals about avian influenza and West Nile Fever. However, notes for guidance accompanying official export health certificates are issued by the Department to certifying veterinarians and exporters of equine animals. Where appropriate these notes give guidance about the need to certify that the exported horse is free from West Nile Fever.

Carbon Allowances

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the allocation of individual carbon allowances in order to help the UK meet Kyoto targets for carbon emissions. [19853]

Mr. Morley: The Government have no plans to use individual carbon allowances or Domestic Tradable Quotas (DTQs) to help the UK meet its Kyoto target. Such concepts, although interesting, are not developed to an extent that would make them feasible.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Minister for Nature, Conservation and Fisheries will reply to the letter from the Member for Banff and Buchan dated 27 August (DEFRA ref 223198) regarding his constituents Mr. and Mrs. W. Ritchie. [21651]

Mr. Bradshaw: I replied to the hon. Member on 26 October.

Cuttlefish

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will fund a study of trends in the number of cuttlefish off the South Devon coast and the causes of changes in numbers; [19796]

(2) if she will make a statement on the state of the cuttlefish population off the South Devon coast. [19797]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cuttlefish population off the South Devon coast is part of the English Channel stock. The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) have only recently completed collaborative studies on this stock. These suggest that the biomass may have increased in recent years. In the meantime, CEFAS continue to monitor trends in landings of the species and catch per unit effort

by the beam trawl fleet, the main UK participants in the fishery. Further more detailed analysis will be undertaken as appropriate.

Fallen Stock Scheme

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the operation of the Fallen Stock Scheme. [20512]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Scheme will have been running for one year next month. The Scheme now has 34,000 members and has made 200,000 fallen stock collections. The Scheme has generally been successful although there were some localised collections difficulties last spring. The National Fallen Stock Company is working with farming organisations and the fallen stock collection industry to address these difficulties and to provide an improved nationwide service in 2006.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on how the fallen stock scheme has performed since its inception, with particular reference to the north west. [22177]

Mr. Bradshaw: The national fallen stock scheme will have been running for one year next month. The scheme now has 34,000 members and has made 200,000 fallen stock collections. The scheme has generally been successful despite some early teething problems and localised collection difficulties last spring during the lambing season—although these were relatively few in the north west of England. The National Fallen Stock Company continues to work with local and national farming organisations and the fallen stock collection industry to provide an improved nationwide service in 2006.

Fly-tipping

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 418W, on fly-tipping, if she will provide the most recent information she has in the same format. [21042]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Flycapture database was established in April 2004 to record all fly-tips reported to and dealt with by waste collection authorities and the Environment Agency. The following data were recorded to the Flycapture database by waste collection authorities between April 2005 and August 2005.

It is important to note that the data are likely to increase as more authorities submit returns and get better at collecting and reporting the data.

Table 1: Number of incidents of fly-tipping in each English region by land type

Region	*Highway*	*Footpath bridleway*	*Back alleyway*	*Railway*	*Council land*
East Midlands	6,984	6,305	852	20	5,027
East of England	11,446	2,152	2,236	14	8,305
Greater London	78,531	9,339	1,354	33	7,946
North East	7,881	2,624	15,357	28	5,626
North West	9,888	8,180	433,892	252	10,584
South East	25,148	3,726	3,889	43	19,370
South West	8,016	873	780	3	2,675
West Midlands	11,357	3,462	991	18	7,240
Yorkshire and Humber	9,662	7,765	2,922	35	68,317

Region	*Agricultural*	*Private residential*	*Commercial industrial*	*Watercourse*	*Other*
East Midlands	117	821	528	70	183
East of England	129	1,190	296	175	630
Greater London	262	1,358	412	14	545
North East	288	522	498	106	637
North West	133	1,513	697	137	1,921
South East	69	886	573	141	536
South West	113	391	88	112	161
West Midlands	33	718	393	69	178
Yorkshire and Humber	261	871	457	97	2,794

Table 2: Number of incidents of fly-tipping in each English region by waste type

Region	*Animal carcass*	*Green*	*Vehicle parts*	*White goods*	*Other electrical*	*Tyres*	*Asbestos*	*Clinical*
East Midlands	413	1,205	561	1,588	436	823	157	167
East of England	245	1,893	703	1,601	597	643	146	64
Greater London	666	5,276	1,796	6,688	2,526	1,855	87	68
North East	194	2,174	512	1,960	790	532	110	71
North West	284	2,107	544	4,175	896	1,003	179	111
South East	684	3,797	1,478	3,691	2,056	1,784	171	83
South West	317	885	393	1,067	486	606	73	93
West Midlands	901	2,451	433	1,158	486	505	95	90
Yorkshire and Humber	261	3,896	609	3,313	713	1,754	186	450

	Construction/ demolition/ excavation	Black bags commercial	Black bags household	Chemical drums oil fuel	Other household	Other commercial	Other
East Midlands	1,359	521	3,995	165	7,611	975	925
East of England	2,167	1,091	3,891	208	9,861	996	2,331
Greater London	6,128	11,342	21,648	187	19,937	3,822	17,768
North East	2,920	1,224	8,006	72	11,356	673	2,973
North West	3,324	1,281	424,584	321	19,798	1,897	6,690
South East	2,008	3,270	13,003	182	17,886	1,363	2,925
South West	970	192	2,327	116	4,446	387	854
West Midlands	1,092	1,358	5,248	94	8,777	577	1,194
Yorkshire and Humber	1,600	3,123	45,495	201	19,130	1,142	11,308

Table 3: Number of incidents of fly-tipping in each London borough by land type

	Highway	Footpath Bridleway	Back alleyway	Railway	Council land
Corporation of London	20	14	4	0	0
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	44	1,957	2	0	0
Bexley Council	91	6	2	0	7
Brent	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	1,430	13	67	0	67
Camden	5,626	0	0	0	0
Croydon	3,841	7	16	2	341
Ealing	2,335	1,556	22	0	0
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	183	110	20	0	38
Hackney	144	0	0	0	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	191	1,812	0	0	13
Haringey	10,120	0	0	0	0
Harrow	453	250	48	2	38
Havering	698	157	59	1	3,429
Hillingdon	436	0	145	5	136
Hounslow	3,808	16	24	0	16
Islington	1,533	0	0	0	1
Lambeth	6,665	0	0	0	0
Lewisham	6,044	516	528	0	1,651
Merton	1,147	100	45	2	25
Newham	—	—	—	—	—
Redbridge	1,968	0	153	0	0
Richmond Upon Thames	631	75	65	2	11
Southwark	8,891	22	43	0	1,751
Sutton	972	10	0	0	185
Tower Hamlets	186	1,553	20	0	175
Waltham Forest	1,424	0	65	19	56
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea	16,779	0	0	0	0
Kingston upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster City Council	2,871	1,165	26	0	6

	Agricultural	Private residential	Commercial industrial	Watercourse	Other
Corporation of London	233	0	0	0	0
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	0	13	0	0	133
Bexley Council	0	1	0	0	0
Brent	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	0	3	0	0	7
Camden	0	0	0	0	0
Croydon	0	30	3	0	27
Ealing	0	126	0	0	0
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	0	10	30	0	0
Hackney	0	0	0	0	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	0	2	0	89
Haringey	0	0	0	0	0
Harrow	0	24	3	0	13
Havering	0	25	7	3	48
Hillingdon	7	177	152	0	12
Hounslow	2	12	11	0	2
Islington	0	0	0	0	8
Lambeth	0	0	0	0	0

	Agricultural	Private residential	Commercial industrial	Watercourse	Other
Lewisham	0	665	0	0	0
Merton	0	80	19	11	2
Newham	—	—	—	—	—
Redbridge	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond Upon Thames	20	4	9	0	0
Southwark	0	7	112	0	8
Sutton	0	136	22	0	0
Tower Hamlets	0	5	2	0	6
Waltham Forest	0	25	31	0	0
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea	0	0	0	0	0
Kingston upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster City Council	0	15	9	0	190

Table 4: Number of incidents of fly-tipping in each London borough by waste type

	Animal carcass	Green	Vehicle parts	White goods	Other electrical	Tyres	Asbestos	Clinical
Corporation of London	0	72	4	13	0	1	1	0
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	1	83	24	227	53	8	0	0
Bexley Council	0	4	2	15	3	7	0	0
Brent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	0	204	39	96	5	73	0	0
Camden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Croydon	10	350	35	641	97	44	5	0
Ealing	151	505	32	381	168	0	11	0
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	20	0	3	58	0	22	2	0
Hackney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	81	9	97	37	1	0	0
Haringey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harrow	25	30	19	55	38	3	0	0
Havering	5	606	101	462	76	207	28	1
Hillingdon	0	44	0	43	0	0	8	0
Hounslow	0	228	45	82	63	53	5	3
Islington	0	34	6	240	17	6	0	0
Lambeth	8	321	13	226	183	431	5	5
Lewisham	253	623	726	1450	413	602	0	0
Merton	2	164	22	110	32	23	2	0
Newham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Redbridge	68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Richmond Upon Thames	0	96	8	70	12	24	6	0
Southwark	20	664	467	748	585	165	1	44
Button	2	62	21	102	31	28	6	1
Tower Hamlets	4	70	57	12	42	74	0	0
Waltham Forest	67	26	20	120	100	20	4	2
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea	27	969	122	1335	503	61	1	10
Kingston Upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster City Council	3	40	21	105	68	2	2	2

	Construction/ demolition/ excavation	Black bags commercial	Black bags Household	Chemical drums oil fuel	Other household	Other consmercial	Other
Corporation of London	45	9	22	5	81	18	0
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	229	63	246	15	727	191	282
Bexley Council	21	1	13	1	32	3	5
Brent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	292	38	305	1	353	47	134
Camden	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,626
Croydon	426	1,537	1,023	2	56	0	41
Ealing	3	336	674	1	67	271	1,439
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	45	60	103	0	70	8	0
Hackney	3	79	12	1	18	8	23
Hammersmith and Fulham	105	33	308	3	808	24	601
Haringey	0	2,332	2,332	0	0	0	5,456
Harrow	45	31	231	5	222	45	82
Havering	141	34	1,891	8	742	60	65

	Construction/ demolition/ excavation	Black bags commercial	Black bags Household	Chemical drums oil fuel	Other household	Other commercial	Other
Hillingdon	50	68	432	0	153	53	219
Hounslow	106	1,173	1,265	11	320	126	411
Islington	99	530	21	17	383	56	133
Lambeth	868	223	737	50	2,391	312	892
Lewisham	1,262	492	1,071	0	2,249	263	0
Merton	176	50	409	3	310	51	77
Newham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Redbridge	0	0	394	0	1,659	0	0
Richmond Upon Thames	78	10	206	1	293	11	2
Southwark	584	352	2,480	21	3,539	542	622
Sutton	260	20	96	1	419	57	219
Tower Hamlets	57	271	514	0	293	469	84
Waltham Forest	52	24	103	0	966	97	19
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea	1,059	3,238	6,013	37	2,897	439	68
Kingston Upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster City Council	122	338	747	4	889	671	1,268

Note:
1. Fly-tipping data based on returns reported to the Flycapture database between April 2005 and August 2005.
2. No data are shown where an authority has failed to submit returns.

Food Imports

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure that food imports meet animal welfare standards imposed in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [22299]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Government are committed to raising standards of animal welfare both at home and internationally.

All food produced within the European Union (EU) that is imported into the UK must meet EU animal welfare standards. However, World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules do not permit restrictions on imports solely on animal welfare grounds. The Government are working with our trading partners to raise the profile of animal welfare issues on the WTO agenda.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to monitor the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Brazil; and what plans she has to restrict the importation of meat from Brazil. [19278]

Mr. Bradshaw: Brazil reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the state of Mato Grosso du Sol on 8 October this year. The Commission advised member states of the outbreak on 10 October, and brought forward a proposal to suspend imports from Mato Grosso du Sol on 11 October. Following discussions in Brussels on 12 October, revised measures were agreed banning imports of meat and offal from Mato du Sol, Sao Paulo and Parana. The UK amended its measures to reflect the changes on 13 October.

The rules for imports of meat are the subject of EU rules. Imports are not permitted from countries or areas of countries where foot and mouth disease is endemic.

The UK monitor the global situation in respect of notifiable diseases. When a new outbreak of a disease is confirmed we carry out an assessment of the risk to the UK and liaise closely with the European Commission and other member states to decide what action is necessary to protect the UK. The UK act promptly in line with Community decisions to ban imports of animals and products from countries or parts of countries that present a risk.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken in response to the recent foot and mouth outbreak in Brazil. [21152]

Mr. Bradshaw: Brazil reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the state of Mato Grosso du Sol on 8 October this year. The Commission advised member states of the outbreak on 10 October, and brought forward a proposal to suspend imports from Mato Grosso du Sol on 11 October. Following discussions in Brussels on 12 October, revised measures were agreed banning imports of meat and offal from Mato du Sol, Sao Paulo and Parana.

The UK monitor the global situation in respect of notifiable diseases. When a new outbreak of a disease is confirmed we carry out an assessment of the risk to the UK and liaise closely with the European Commission and other member states to decide what action is necessary to protect the UK.

The UK act promptly in line with Community decisions to ban imports of animals and products from countries or parts of countries that present a risk.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the safety of beef from Brazil, with particular reference to the incidence of foot and mouth disease in that country. [22164]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 13 October 2005, in line with EU action, the UK banned imports of bovine meat from the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo in Brazil due to the foot and mouth outbreak in Mato Grosso do Sul.

We carry out risk assessments of any disease outbreak which occurs in a country which is permitted under EU regulations to export to the EU. The action we took to ban imports from the affected states of Brazil was in line with our assessment.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risk of re-introduction of foot and mouth disease arising from the importation of Brazilian beef. [23538]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 13 October 2005, in line with EU action, the UK banned imports of bovine meat from the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo in Brazil due to the food and mouth outbreak in Mato Grosso do Sul.

We carry out risk assessments of any disease outbreak which occurs in a country which is permitted under EU regulations to export to the EU. The action we took to ban imports from the affected states of Brazil was in line with our assessment.

Game Birds

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will commission independent scientific research into the welfare impact of the use of battery cages to house game birds; and if she will make a statement. [20551]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are currently no plans to commission research into the use of battery cages to house game birds.

However, the Animal Welfare Bill will seek to establish the general principle that people have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of animals they are responsible for. In relation to game birds, we propose to use the powers available under the Bill to reinforce the duty to ensure welfare by formally regulating their keeping. We will aim to introduce a code of practice to provide guidance on accommodation and management methods and ensure that high welfare standards are met. These arrangements would be subject to consultation with the public and expert stakeholders, and separate endorsement by Parliament.

Greyhounds

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on improving greyhound welfare standards at non-National Greyhound Racing Clubs-registered racing tracks. [21822]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* Defra ran a public consultation on a draft Animal Welfare Bill in 2002. Respondents raised the issue of greyhound welfare at both National Greyhound Racing Club (NGRC)-registered tracks and the 'independent' tracks. An analysis of the replies to this consultation is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/domestic/awbillconsultanalysis.pdf

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent estimate she has made of the number of greyhounds, retired from racing, which are *(a)* homed and *(b)* destroyed each year. [21823]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The Government does not hold data on retired greyhounds. However, evidence supplied to Defra suggests that there may be a problem with the number of greyhounds which are not properly re-homed when retired from racing.

This summer, Defra set up a Greyhound Working Group to examine issues relating to greyhound welfare, including the fate of retired greyhounds.

Hazardous Waste

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of costs resulting from the illegal dumping of hazardous waste in Essex in the last period for which figures are available. [21020]

Mr. Bradshaw: Waste collection authorities and the Environment Agency in Essex dealt with a total 25,009 incidents of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005 at total estimated cost of £1,263,727. Of these incidents, 297 were Asbestos or Chemical/Oil/Drums.

The total cost estimate is based on the size of incident not the waste type. It is likely that these figures are an underestimate as they come from the first year of the Flycapture database and will not include all incidents on private land.

Landfill Diversion

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria apply when a local authority is considering a private finance initiative response to cope with landfill diversion; whether this will include energy from waste solutions; and if she will make a statement. [22444]

Mr. Bradshaw: Proposed PFI projects must meet value for money criteria. These general PFI criteria are set out in the PFI Project Support Guide issued by HM Treasury, available at www.local.odpm.gov.uk/pfi/pfisupport.pdf.

A set of waste-specific PFI criteria were introduced in 2000 and ensure that projects focus on recycling-led solutions and sustainable solutions in keeping with the waste hierarchy. These criteria were amended in 2003 and can be found at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/localauth/funding/pfi/criteria.htm.

Revisions to these criteria are currently the subject of consultation. The revised criteria set out formally points that are already enshrined in guidance and good practice already being encouraged for authorities bidding for credits over the last two years.

The criteria emphasise that waste strategies should pay due regard to the waste hierarchy. The Government support the use of incineration with energy recovery for the disposal of residual waste left following re-use and recycling, or where materials cannot be safely or practically re-used or recycled.

Legal Meat Imports

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the potential health and safety issues raised by legal meat imports. [22166]

Mr. Bradshaw: Animal health requirements for the import of meat from countries outside the EU are set in European law.

Meat may only come from countries regarded as having adequate veterinary services, a good history of disease control and a programme in place to monitor the presence of residues of veterinary medicines in animal products.

If these conditions are fulfilled, the country is approved to export to the EU.

Furthermore, meat may only be imported from EU approved establishments and must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate. All meat imported into the EU must be taken directly to a border inspection post where it is checked by official veterinarians.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many countries which export beef to the UK foot and mouth has been reported. [22179]

Mr. Bradshaw: In general, countries that are permitted to export to the EU must not have had any outbreak of foot and mouth disease. However, some countries are regionalised to allow imports from areas of the country which are not affected by the disease.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many air miles were accrued through ministerial travel in her Department in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17326]

Margaret Beckett: Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers. Guidance for Ministers on the use of air miles is set out in the Ministerial Code. The guidance makes clear that air miles should be used only for official purposes or else foregone. However, if it is impracticable to use the benefits for Government travel, there is no objection to Ministers donating them to charity where this is permissible under the terms of the airline's scheme and the charity is one chosen by the airline.

Similar rules are in place for officials. No records are held centrally of any such donations.

Plastic Bag Tax

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of a plastic bag tax; and if she will make a statement. [20891]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government recognize the benefits of reducing the number of plastic bags used, but does not consider that the case for a tax on plastic bags has been demonstrated conclusively. A recent Extended Impact Assessment carried out by the Scottish Executive on a proposal to introduce a levy on plastic carrier bags in Scotland concluded that there would be a broad environmental disbenefit if a levy was introduced on the lines proposed. We are continuing to keep developments in Scotland and Ireland under review.

The number of single-use plastic bags in circulation could be significantly reduced through reuse and recycling, so we have asked the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to investigate the feasibility of a national Bag for Life scheme. This would encourage consumers to use strong, re-usable plastic bags in place of single-use bags. Life cycle analysis surveys suggest that re-using such bags between four and seven times would have significant environmental benefits when compared to alternatives such as plastic carrier bags, paper bags and biodegradable bags.

WRAP are currently trialling a national Bag for Life scheme in Bristol and Edinburgh, in association with supermarket retailers, the Scottish Executive, the British Retail Consortium and Scottish Waste Awareness. Approximately 35 to 40 supermarket outlets in each town will take part in these trials.

Recycling

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much Government funding has been allocated to *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* the Waste and Resources Action Programme for assisting small and medium enterprises to increase recycling; [19766]

(2) how much she has allocated to the feasibility study and trials of collecting materials for recycling from small and medium enterprises; and if she will make a statement. [19770]

Mr. Bradshaw: On *(a)* there is no specific Defra funding programme enabling local authorities to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to increase recycling. However, local authorities are free to use unringfenced funding provided under the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services block of revenue support grant, or the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant for these purposes.

On *(b)* Defra have allocated £556,000 to WRAP in 2005–06 to conduct a pilot project on collection of recyclables from SMEs.

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to assist small and medium-sized enterprises to identify appropriate recycling services. [19771]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra is funding the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to conduct a pilot project to assess the feasibility of greater recyclate collection services for small and 'medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

This feasibility study will deliver a series of trials of collecting materials for recycling from SMEs in order to evaluate a range of factors including geographical location, collection and communication techniques and financial models. Several business sectors are to be targeted through the trials including offices, retail and wholesale, pubs, hotels and restaurants, glaziers and window replacement companies. The trials will seek to provide an appropriate recycling service for SMEs including provision of collection infrastructure and communication resources.

Slaughterhouses

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will seek an amendment to the Waste Incineration Directive to allow rendered animal tallow to continue to be used as a fuel in slaughterhouses and rendering plants. [21898]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The Waste Incineration Directive does not preclude the use of waste tallow as fuel in slaughterhouses or rendering plants. The aim of the Directive is to prevent or to limit as far as practicable negative effects on the environment from the incineration and co-incineration of waste. I have written twice to the European Commission, asking for an amendment to the Waste Incineration Directive to exclude from its scope plants which only burn waste tallow. Although I have not yet received a substantive reply from DG Environment, I understand that they intend to commission a study of the issue.

TB

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what species of animals TB has been found; and in what year it was first identified in each species. [21683]

Mr. Bradshaw: *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* We are unable to provide the information requested, as this would only be available at a disproportionate cost.

The Chief Veterinary Officer's annual report, available on the Defra website, provides a summary of TB cases reported in animals other than cattle and badgers. A copy of the annual report is available in the House Library.

The Central Science Laboratory (CSL) has recently published a report entitled 'The risk to cattle from wildlife species other than badgers in areas of high herd breakdown risk'. This shows that *M bovis* has been isolated from a number of British wildlife species; notably foxes, stoats, polecats, common shrews, yellow-necked mice, wood mice, field voles, grey squirrels and deer. This document is available on the Defra website at: http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/More.asp?I=SE3010&M=KWS&V=se3010&SCOPE=0

Further information can be found in the CSL paper 'The Status of *Mycobacterium bovis* Infection in UK Wild Mammals: A Review' A copy of this paper is available in the Library of the House.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of badger setts in which tuberculosis is present; and what steps she is taking to test all badger setts for evidence of tuberculosis. [21799]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* There are no reliable techniques to either assess the infective status of a sett or the badgers that may regularly or occasionally live within it.

The use of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing on environmental samples for *Mycobacterium bovis (M. bovis)* is being assessed by the Veterinary Laboratory Agency and Imperial College. There are concerns that the current PCR tests are low in sensitivity, may not be detecting viable organisms and not be specific for *M. bovis*. This can lead to false positive results when other mycobacteria are present.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the known wildlife reservoirs of bovine TB; and which are the subject of Government-commissioned research into the causes and transmission of bovine TB. [21985]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is well known that *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*) is endemic in the badger population and this has been the subject of many detailed studies. *M. bovis* has also been isolated from a number of mammalian species including red deer, sika deer, roe deer, fallow deer, fox, mink, brown rat, and mole.

More recently, a study conducted by Oxford University (SE3009) carried out a systematic survey of over four thousand small mammals and found *M. bovis* in a single bank vole and three badgers. Another survey conducted by Central Science Laboratory (SE3010) found *M. bovis* in fox, stoat, common shrew, yellow necked mouse, wood mouse, field vole, grey squirrel, roe deer, red deer, fallow deer, and muntjac deer. Many of these had been shown in the past to harbour *M. bovis* occasionally, but this project has been the first to show *M. bovis* in muntjac deer. The prevalence in most of these species was very low and ecological factors suggested that they posed little risk. However, the findings highlighted red and fallow deer as being of potential risk to cattle. Therefore, Defra has commissioned two quantitative risk assessment studies to try to quantify the risk wild deer may pose in spreading TB to cattle.

The final report from SE3010 can be found on the Defra website at: <http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/More.asp?I=SE3010&M=KWS&V=se3010&SCOPE=0>.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on cattle to cattle transfer of bovine TB. [21986]

Mr. Bradshaw: The results of DEFRA-funded research 'Cattle Movements and Bovine Tuberculosis in GB' were published in Nature on 26 May 2005. The research demonstrated that the movement of cattle is a

critical risk-factor for the disease. This supports the case for pre-movement testing, which we aim to introduce in England as quickly as possible.

A number of measures have been introduced aimed at tightening surveillance and reducing the risk of TB spreading to new areas. The recalculation of routine testing intervals will ensure TB testing complies with Commission legislation while offering robust protection. Livestock movement restrictions are now imposed immediately a herd's routine test becomes overdue and a more rigorous and systematic approach to identifying and dealing with potential new TB hotspots is in place. In addition to this, rigorous testing schedules for new and reformed herds have been introduced.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will order the cull of badgers with bovine TB; and if she will make a statement. [22272]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently working on modelling and cost-benefit analysis of badger culling options using existing and emerging data. The Government is prepared to cull badgers if the available evidence shows that it is cost-effective, practicable, sustainable and humane. Our policy must be part of a balanced approach to reducing TB in cattle. I plan to make an announcement on more detailed plans for dealing with bovine TB later this autumn.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent evidence she has evaluated on the incidence of bovine tuberculosis amongst the badger population of the UK. [22488]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no centrally collected data on the incidence of bovine TB in the badger population at a UK level.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further action she plans to take to counter the spread of tuberculosis in cattle; and if she will make a statement. [23131]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend for the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 667W.

Waste

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what percentage of controlled non-municipal waste in England and Wales was classified as recyclable in each year since 1995; [19210]

(2) what the total amount of controlled waste from non-municipal sources in England and Wales was for each of the years 1995 to 2005; and what amount of controlled waste from such sources went to landfill in each year. [19211]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information is not available for all years in the format requested. Information is not available on the amounts of non-municipal waste which is recyclable but not actually recycled or re-used. The tables show available information on controlled non-municipal waste. Information for construction and demolition waste cover England only. Industrial and commercial waste cover England and Wales. Information for dredged materials cover United Kingdom.

Controlled non-municipal waste, total arisings[1]

Million tonnes

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Construction and demolition	—	—	69	—	89	—	91
Industrial	—	50	—	—	—	42	—
Commercial	—	25	—	—	—	31	—
Dredged materials[2]	22	17	33	17	—	—	—

[1] In addition there is around one million tonnes of sewage sludge produced each year.

[2] Materials dumped at sea.

Controlled non-municipal waste, recycled and re-used

Million tonnes (percentage of total source)

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Construction and demolition	—	—	24(35)	—	43 (49)	—	45 (50)
Industrial	—	22 (44)	—	—	—	20 (49)	—
Commercial	—	6 (24)	—	—	—	11 (37)	—

Controlled non-municipal waste, sent to landfill

Million tonnes (percentage of total source)

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Construction and demolition	—	—	26 (37)	—	23 26)	—	29 (32)
Industrial	—	21 (42)	—	—	—	14 (34)	—
Commercial	—	13 (54)	—	—	—	15 (48)	—

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will introduce a zero waste policy as a long-term goal of its waste strategy. [19765]

Mr. Bradshaw: Waste Strategy 2000 set out the Government's priorities for sustainable waste management. The Government's response to the Strategy Unit Report "Waste Not Want Not" identified further steps to be taken to help deliver our priorities and targets. Although Waste Strategy 2000 is not a zero waste strategy (either zero waste to landfill, or a totally closed resource cycle), it does demand substantial waste minimisation, and significantly increased levels of re-use and recycling. In our current review of Waste Strategy 2000 we are considering what our long-term goal should be.

Whaling

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 474W, on whaling, how meat from whales killed under special permits was then sold on the consumer market. [20263]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under Article VIII of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling any whales taken under special permits shall so far as practicable be processed and the proceeds shall be dealt with in accordance with directions issued by the Government by which the permit was granted.

It is therefore a matter for those countries who conduct whaling operations under special permit to decide how they dispose of the meat of the whales taken. Only Japan and Iceland conduct such operations and we understand that the vast majority of the whale meat derived therefrom is sold on their domestic markets.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Africa

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what response he has made to the recent African Union Declaration on EU-ACP economic partnership agreements, with particular reference to Reform Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. [21662]

Ian Pearson: The UK has not responded to the African Union declaration. In the UK position paper on Economic Partnership Agreements published in March, the Government said that

> 'the EU should propose within the WTO that Article XXIV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, should be reviewed as suggested by the Commission for Africa, in order to reduce the requirements for reciprocity and increase the focus on development priorities.'

Anti-Dumping Legislation

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on the anti-dumping legislation on polythene bags being proposed by the European Commission. [20524]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The European Commission has yet to propose anti-dumping legislation on polyethylene bags originating in China, Malaysia and Thailand. If it does so, any proposal will be examined on its merits.

Atomic Energy

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements there are for the review of security at the Dounreay Atomic Energy Research Centre. [20980]

Malcolm Wicks: Security at the UK's civil nuclear sites is kept under regular review by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS), the security regulator. They are satisfied that existing procedures are robust and effective.

Awards

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what awards his Department has sponsored in the last 12 months; what the value was of each; and how many entries were received for each award. [20961]

Alan Johnson: This information is not held centrally within the DTI. An answer to this question could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Below-cost Retailing

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will assess the effects of introducing a ban on below-cost retail selling; and what assessment he has made of the extent of such bans in other EU countries. [20888]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* I have no plans to assess the effect of introducing a ban on below-cost retail selling at the current time.

The Competition Commission (CC) monopoly report 'Supermarkets: A Report on the Supply of Groceries from multiple stores in the United Kingdom' was published on 10 October 2000. The CC concluded that the practice of persistent below-cost selling when conducted by supermarkets with market power, operates against the public interest. However, the CC stated that remedies to prevent below-cost selling could themselves have adverse effects and would be disproportionate to the problem. Therefore the CC made no recommendations for remedial action. In its report, the CC noted that bans on sales below-cost in other countries had not been very effective.

The European Commission is currently undertaking a study of member state regulations on sales below-cost and my Department will follow the results with interest.

Clear Skies Programme

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures he is taking to ensure the continuity of grants for both sections of the Clear Skies Programme. [21390]

Malcolm Wicks: The Clear Skies Programme is being replaced by the low Carbon Building Programme and we are currently developing the details of the new

programme and considering how best to ensure a smooth transition with minimal disruption to grant support.

Clearskies and Solar Photovoltaics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to replace the grant scheme for clear skies and photovoltaics when they come to an end. [22897]

Malcolm Wicks: Clear Skies and the Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme will be replaced by a low carbon buildings programme which is due to be in place by April 2006.

Company Law

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to introduce a statutory duty on company directors *(a)* to consider, *(b)* report on and *(c)* to mitigate negative impacts which their business may have on communities and their environment in his proposed reform of company law. [22077]

Alun Michael: The Government regards responsible business behaviour as very important and that corporate social responsibility can help companies to become more efficient, more profitable and more sustainable. The Company Law Reform Bill will address one aspect of corporate social responsibility through its introduction of a statutory statement of directors general duties. This will provide greater clarity to directors on how they are expected to behave. The basic goal of directors is the success of the company in the collective best interests of shareholders, but in fulfilling this duty directors will be required, to have regard to factors such as the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment. This approach will give directors the clarity they need, while recognising that business prosperity and responsible business behaviour are two sides of the same coin. It complements the requirement on quoted companies to report on matters such as social and community issues and the environment in the operating and financial review where these are necessary for an understanding of the nature of the business.

The Government recognises that the corporate social responsibility agenda is varied and wide. It does not believe that company law reform can address all of the issues within this agenda, and it will continue to consider more broadly how the regulatory and fiscal framework can encourage responsible business behaviour.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on allowing stakeholders a means of redress when companies have had a negative impact on communities or the environment; and if he will make a statement. [22078]

Alun Michael: The Government has received a large number of responses to its proposals for company law reform. Many of these have commented on the proposals relating to the statutory statement of directors' duties, and on issues relating to the question "in whose interests should companies be run?". The responses have been considered carefully and have informed the drafting of the relevant clauses of the Company Law Reform Bill.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's total spending on management consultants has been in each of the last three years. [13153]

Alun Michael: Central records indicate that the Department's total spending on management consultants in each of the last three financial years has been as follows:

	£
2003–04	1,107,186
2004–05	2,005,669
2005–06	[1]1,095,494

[1] To date.

Departmental Publications

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* publications and *(b)* surveys his Department has published in each year since 1997; and how many copies of these publications have been (i) distributed to businesses in hard copy and (ii) placed on the Department's website. [20958]

Alan Johnson: Between 1 January 1997 and 20 October 2005 10,066 titles were produced and notified to my Department's Publications Unit. On 20 October 2005, 3,889 were currently available, of which 2,516 were available on the website. Figures for individual years could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Under the current contract for distribution of hard copy publications 8,158,884 items were dispatched in 2003, 6,578,809 in 2004 and 4,250,532 from 1 January to 20 October 2005. Figures for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. It is not possible to distinguish between items sent to businesses and those sent to individuals.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what cost benefit analysis is undertaken by his Department prior to commissioning publications and surveys; and if he will make a statement. [20959]

Alan Johnson: Cost Benefit Appraisal guidance is made available to all producers of DTI publications.

Statistical surveys throughout government are subject to Survey Control procedures co-ordinated by the Office for National Statistics. These procedures ensure compliance with instructions laid down by the Prime Minister in 1999 (see link below).

All survey sponsors must obtain Survey Control clearance.

Departments provide summary survey control information to ONS to produce the 'Annual Report of GSS Survey Activity' (see link below). Details of the balance of costs and benefits for each survey conducted in the Department are not however collated centrally.

Prime Minister's Instructions
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/quality/downloads/gss_survey_control_new_instructions_inc_pms_note.pdf

Annual Report of GSS Survey Activity
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_other/GSSReport2003-04.pdf

Departmental Staff

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the secondees *(a)* working and *(b)* who have worked during the last 12 months in his Department; and which organisation each has been seconded from. [17407]

Alan Johnson: The table indicates the secondees currently working in the Department of Trade and Industry and the organisation each has been seconded from.

Name of Secondee	*Organisation Name*
Mr. Lew Adams	Strategic Rail Authority
Professor Christine Adams	SIRA Ltd.
Dr. Helen Almey	dstl
Mr. Norman Bolton	TUV NEL
Mr. Edwin Bowles	Exploration Consultants Ltd.
Ms Sara Brazendale	Reuters Ltd.
Mr. David Brooks	BP plc
Mr. Michael Cauter	KPMG
Mr. Andy Clarey	BT Group plc
Mr. Edward Clarke	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
Ms Jessica Cobb	Forensic Accounting Ltd.
Mr. Graham Cook	PKF
Mr. Brian Nicholas Cook	UKPIA
Mr. Hugh Crooks	Royal Agricultural Society of England
Mr. Mark Donougher	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Ms Julia Durham	Cardiff County Council
Mr. Kevin Ennis	Royal Bank of Scotland
Dr. Andy Feest	AEA Technology plc
Ms Rebecca Garrod	Northwest Development Agency
Mr. Michael Gilbert	National Grid Transco
Mr. Jeremy Goad	Black and Veatch Ltd.
Dr. Paul Gower	Financial Services Authority
Ms Claire Graham	Cobbetts
Mr. John Griggs	Building Research Establishment
Mr. William Harris	Fife Council
Mr. Nick Heyes	Marine Electronic Services Ltd.
Mr. Ben Higgin	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Dr. Diane Houston	University of Kent
Mr. Thomas Huang	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Robert Hudson	Hyder Consulting
Mr. Jonathan Hughes	Deloitte & Touche
Mr. Marcus Jackson	Ernst & Young
Ms Rosie Janes	BDO Stoy Hayward
Mr. Gary Kass	Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology
Mr. Patrick Keen	South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
Mr. John Law	WPS Environmental Ltd
Mr. Markus Loebbert	Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour
Mr. Jonathan Lonsdale	Ecotec Research & Consulting Ltd.
Dr. Christopher Mansfield	Shell UK Exploration & Production
Ms Joanne Marsden	dstl
Mr. Alan Me Arthur	Middlesborough College
Mr. Iain McCord	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Mr. Malcolm Mitchell	Chemical Industries Association
Ms Barbara Morton	Manchester School of Management
Mr. Noah Myers	URS Corporation
Mr. Daniel Ninan	GKN
Ms Emily Nott	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
Mr. Allan Ockenden	Mott MacDonald Group Ltd.
Mr. Ray Parkinson	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Phillip Patterson	Association of Independent Music Ltd.
Dr. Robert Quarshie	Corus
Ms Amber Raz	Fawcett Society
Mr. Leon Rogers	National Physical Laboratory
Mr. Mark Russell	KPMG
Mr. Dave Schultz	BT Group plc
Mr. Stephen Senior	Ernst & Young
Mr. Michael Shanks	RWE Innogy plc
Mr. Garth Shephard	Envisage Ltd.
Mr. Gordon Stevenson	Lee & Allen Consulting Ltd.
Mr. Risto Talas	Maritime & Underwater Consultants Ltd.
Mr. David Talbot	British Geological Survey
Mr. Charlie Villar	Deloitte & Touche
Mr. Neil Viner	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
Mr. John von Speyr	DSL Consultants Ltd.
Mr. Jeremy Webb	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Dr. Sarah Webb	Natural Environment Research Council
Mr. Stephen Westwood	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
Ms Barbara Wilson	Corgi Hosiery Ltd.
Mr. Gordon Wright	BAE Systems plc
Mr. John Wright	Kellogg Brown & Root Ltd.

The following table indicates the secondees that completed their secondments to the Department of Trade and Industry during the last 12 months and the organisation each was seconded from.

Name of Secondee	*Organisation Name*
Mr. Colin Ager	National Physical Laboratory
Ms Silu Ali	Oracle Corporation UK Ltd.
Mr. Martyn Alien	BAE Systems plc
Ms Rita Barallon	LGC Ltd.
Mr. Malcolm Barents	UKAEA
Mr. Mike Barradell	KPMG
Mr. David Basford	Smiths Aerospace
Mr. Frederick Bassnett	Raylian London
Ms Fahima Begum	BT Group plc
Ms Sandra Blair	BAE Systems plc
Ms Debbie Boswell	British Jewellery and Giftware Federation
Ms Carol Brady	Kent County Council
Ms Jennifer Churchward	Ernst & Young
Ms Jos Cleare	Hill & Knowlton
Mr. Peter Concannon	FaberMaunsell
Mr. David Crookes	RWE npower plc
Mr. Adam Dawson	Shell Information Technologies International
Dr. Ian Downey	Science Systems (Space) Ltd.
Ms Lynn Duggan	London Borough of Camden
Mr. Alan Eastwood	Chemical Industries Association
Ms Melanie Evans	BAE Systems plc
Mr. Paul Fawcett	HSBC Bank
Mr. Christian Franceschi	DSL Consultants Ltd.
Mr. Richard Francis	RWE NUKEM Ltd.
Mr. Tony Godley	UKAEA
Dr. Hilary Hartigan	NPL Management Ltd.
Mr. Christopher Hill	Shell UK Exploration & Production
Mr. David Hodgson	London First Centre
Mr. Mark Holt	Business Link Cheshire and Warrington
Ms Judith Hopson	Marine Electronic Services Ltd.
Ms Nicole Hough	UKAEA
Mr. Mike Jewitt	Business Link Leicester
Dr. James Johnstone	NPL Management Ltd.
Miss Briony Jones	Lloyds TSB Group plc
Ms Alexia Jones	Deluca
Mr. Anthony Kildare	Yorkshire Forward
Ms Jane Kilgannon	Disability Rights Commission
Professor David King	Cambridge University
Mr. Errol Levy	Astrium UK
Ms Carolyn Luke	BAE Systems plc
Mr. Peter Maggs	BP plc
Ms Anne McFarlane	Natural Environment Research Council
Mr. Masaharu Minami	Japan Fair Trade Commission
Mr. Richard Mrowicki	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Adrian Nicholls	Ernst & Young
Ms Eva Park	Seoul International Post Office
Ms Magdalena Roel	BP plc
Ms Philippa Ryan	East Midland Development Agency
Ms Manjit Sahota	BAE Systems plc
Mr. Robin Sellers	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Martyn Skinner	Tate & Lyle plc
Mr. Robin Sloan	Ove Arup & Partners
Ms Philippa Spence	Australian Civil Service

Name of Secondee	Organisation Name
Mr. James Stephens	BAE Systems plc
Mr. David Still	AMEC Project Investments
Mr. Peter Tandy	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Gary Taylor	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Oliver Towers	Rolls-Royce plc
Mr. John Varney	Nottingham Trent University
Mr. John Vernon	Passionate Spirits Ltd.
Mr. John Vimpany	Exhibition Consultants Ltd.
Ms Jenny Ward	Teacher Training Agency
Mr. David Warner	British Nuclear Fuel plc
Mr. Frank Watson	IBM (UK)
Mr. David Williams	Gilbert Gilkes & Gordon

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the rates of employee absence in his Department have been in each year since 1997. [21028]

Alan Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based on. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21121]

Alan Johnson: The Department of Trade and Industry offers all employees on an equal basis the right to attend courses to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. These include courses offered by the departmental supplier of training such as effective written skills. We also offer the chance to pursue the skills for life numeracy and literacy programme at an independent educational establishment on day release if they so choose.

Departmental Vehicles

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the fuel efficiency is of each make and model of vehicle *(a)* owned and *(b)* leased by his Department. [17900]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Department does not own any vehicles.

(b) The fuel efficiency of each make and model of vehicle leased by staff for business use in the Department is:

Vehicle	CO_2 emissions (g/km)
Citroen C3 1.4i LX	148
Fiat Punto 1.2 MIA	136
Ford Focus 1.8TDi	143
FordKALSi	154
Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 LS	183

The following vehicles are provided by the Government Car Service for use by the DTI:

Vehicle	CO_2 emissions (g/km)
Toyota Prius x4	104
Ford Mondeo x1	218
Ford Mondeo Zetec x1	218
Rover 75 x1	249

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps have been taken to meet his Department's commitment in the Energy White paper to make maximum use of new vehicles and fuels in the Department's fleet of vehicles. [17901]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not own any vehicles. It provides five vehicles for business use through a vehicle lease contract. DTI is considering joining an across government framework lease car agreement which should be in place in 2006, and will at that point evaluate available vehicle options within that agreement to make maximum use of more fuel efficient vehicles and increased use of low carbon fuels.

The rules relating to the use of official cars by Ministers and their spouses or partners and officials are set out in the Prime Minister's guidance 'Travel by Ministers'. This guidance also identifies the vehicles that can be provided by the Government Car Service.

Developing Countries (Trade)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Department is taking to increase the accessibility of markets in the UK to trade from developing countries. [23144]

Ian Pearson: The best opportunity for increasing the accessibility of the EU market to trade with developing countries is a successful and ambitious result from the Doha Development Agenda in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We are working closely with the European Commission, other member states and other governments to secure this as the WTO Conference in Hong Kong in December draws closer.

In the past year, we have worked with the Commission to revise the EU's Generalised System of Preferences, which offers preferential access for developing countries to the now even larger European market, and tariff and quota free access for the Least Developed Countries. In addition, negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are under way and the Government published a position paper on their development objectives for these agreements in March.

The UK is also supporting capacity building in developing countries in trade policy and negotiations to the tune of £165 million over three years, by supporting organisations such as the Centre for WTO Law and the South Centre.

Diesel

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with EU colleagues on diesel prices. [23564]

Malcolm Wicks: There have been no discussions with my counterparts on diesel prices.

Recent changes in diesel prices reflect increases in the price of crude oil on the global market. This is due to strong oil demand and geopolitical uncertainty in key producing countries.

Electrical Waste

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the costs which may be incurred by local authorities as a result of the change in the timescale for the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Directive Legislation; and if he will make a statement. [20892]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have accepted that the deferral of producer responsibility for waste electrical and electronic equipment may have implications for local authorities due to the Landfill Regulations Waste Acceptance Criteria which now apply to waste, including some WEEE products which may be separately collected and hence classified as hazardous and which is then sent to hazardous landfill.

The Department has undertaken to meet additional costs to local authorities in this context, in relation to any hazardous WEEE in line with the New Burdens principle. The Department is now working to establish the practical arrangements to meet additional costs which local authorities may incur.

Emissions Trading

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effects of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on the investment intentions of the electricity generating sector; and if he will make a statement. [20953]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have commissioned a report on the impact of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on the electricity generating sector including future investment. The final report will be published in due course.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received regarding the effects of the Emissions Trading Scheme on the investment intentions of the electricity generating sector. [20954]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government has received a number of responses from the electricity generating sector to its recent consultation on Phase II of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, many of which covered the impact of the scheme on investment in the sector. The consultation closed on 27 September 2005, a summary of the responses received will be published in due course.

Energy Efficiency/Prices/Promotion Expenditure

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken *(a)* to improve resource efficiency and *(b)* to reduce waste and harmful emissions across business sectors, with particular reference to the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste programme. [21506]

Malcolm Wicks: The joint DTI /DEFRA Envirowise programme is the main government initiative promoting resource efficiency to business, with an emphasis on prevention (avoidance and minimisation of production of waste) rather than cure (managing existing wastes by recycling, disposal, etc). As such the programme is an important delivery mechanism for our Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) aims and objectives, as set out in the Governments SCP Framework "Changing Patterns: the UK Government Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production".

The DEFRA Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme is providing £50 million over three years to be spent through the Technology Programme. Support is provided through competitions held twice a year for collaborative research and development projects, with support also for Knowledge Transfer Networks. To date there have been two competitions held in November 2004 and April 2005.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken by the Government to help energy-intensive small to medium-sized companies tackle rising energy prices. [23173]

Malcolm Wicks: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as large companies are represented by the Energy Intensive Users' Group on the DTI's Gas Prices Working Group, which was set up by the then Secretary of State at the end of last year. This group met monthly in the first half of this year and has agreed an Action List of short to medium term measures, such as maximising gas supplies, improving the functioning of the market, encouraging demand side response and pursuing energy market liberalisation in the European Union.

In addition, the Department and Energywatch are planning a seminar for SMEs and public sector bodies, focusing on energy prices and best practice in contracting. This will take place in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, on Wednesday 30 November.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money the Government have spent on promoting the use of *(a)* wind power, *(b)* solar power, *(c)* hydro power and *(d)* nuclear power in each of the last five years. [21687]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* It has not been possible to collate all public expenditure and other Government support since 1999 for energy technologies in the time available at proportionate cost. However it is possible to detail direct DTI and Research Council expenditure on new and renewables, and nuclear. These are set out in the following tables.

In addition to this both DEFRA and the Scottish Executive provide funding to the Carbon Trust which conducts research into low carbon energy activities among other activities.

DTI new and renewable energy programme—external spend for each technology area by financial year from 1990–91 (rounded to nearest £000)

	Spend					
Programme area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Hydro	138,000	60,000	130,000	200,000	85,000	0
Solar	1,278,000	1,264,000	1,522,000	4,485,000	3,131,000	1,970,340
Tidal	0	27,000	305,000	1,996,000	2,914,000	1,268,530
Wave	11,000	331,000	662,000	748,000	2,104,000	—
Wind	801,000	913,000	1,248,000	1,428,000	1,395,000	1,459,600

Notes:
1. From 2000–01, figures do not include spend on contracts placed direct by DTI.
2. For 2004–05, the figure for tidal is a combined spend for the wave and tidal.

Figures for direct Government expenditure (but not including spending by the Research Councils) on nuclear fission

£

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Nuclear	2,500,000	0	2,000,000	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,200,000
DTI Capital Grant Programmes						
Offshore Wind Capital Grants	—	—	—	—	0	15,000,000
Clear Skies Community Renewables	—	—	—	200,000	1,387,000	2,413,000
Major PV Demo Programme	—	—	—	960,000	2,880,000	6,450,000

Research council spend

£

Programme area	*1999–00*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–4*	*2004–5*
Solar	1,076,000	1,134,000	1,130,000	1,157,000	1,453,023	1,753,334
Photovoltaic	2,759,517	2,991,977	3,536,428	2,770,354	2,381,044	2,761,866
Wave and tidal	175,000	300,599	605,693	616,694	830,226	1,050,253
Wind	177,716	260,596	330,283	490,447	481,572	255,672
Wind/solar	21,000	100,000	0	0	0	0
Wind/wave	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000	28,000
Fission power	61,793	127,562	324,879	307,195	212,239	125,453
Fusion	14,300,000	17,000,000	14,400,000	14,600,000	15,630,000	19,530,000

European Contractors

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the contractors based in other EU member states that are providing services to his Department. [15451]

Ian Pearson: The Department awarded contracts to the following companies based in other EU member states during calendar year 2004.

Austria—Enconet Gmbh

Sweden—Eskonsult SE (two contracts jointly with Serco Assurance, part of Serco Group plc)

Enconet Gmbh (Austria) and Eskonsult SE (Sweden) won a further three contracts, on a joint basis.

Lithuania—American English School (part of the US State Department)

Lithuania—Public Services Language Centre (part of University of Helsinki)

Belgium—Westinghouse Electric (Europe) Company LLC (two contracts)

Spain—Tecnatom SA (jointly with Serco Assurance, part of Serco Group plc)

Germany—OSAE Offshore Survey and Engineering GmbH

Information on other years is available only at disproportionate cost.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what amount he is budgeting to cover possible liability for costs *(a)* for his Department and *(b)* for those for whom his Department has agreed to pay all or any part of their costs in relation to the action for judicial review brought against his Department by Corner House in respect of Export Credit Guarantee Department forms. [20789]

Ian Pearson: As at 30 September 2005, the estimate for the costs of ECGD's external solicitors, costs consultants and counsel in relation to the action for judicial review brought by the Corner House was £70,850, exclusive of VAT. ECGD has not yet reached agreement with the Corner House as to its costs claim, although cost assessment proceedings are continuing. ECGD is thus not in a position to provide a current budget for possible liability for costs in this matter.

Export Licences (Saudi Arabia)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list recent export licence applications in respect of arms sales to Saudi Arabia; and if he will make a statement. [22019]

Malcolm Wicks: Export licence applications are made to the Government in confidence and the information they contain is therefore exempt from disclosure. The

Government publishes detailed information on its export licensing decisions, by destination, in its Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls. The Government's Annual Reports are available from the Libraries of the House, and our Quarterly Reports, from the DTI Export Control Organisation website, www.dti.gov.uk/export.control.

Fire Gas Desulphuration Equipment

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department's methodology for allocating carbon allowances for phase II of the EU emissions trading scheme treats new-build Fire Gas Desulphuration (FGD) equipment on the same basis as other FGD equipment already installed. [21821]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The Government are still considering the approach to Phase II of the Emissions Trading Scheme, including the treatment of installations with Flue Gas Desulphurisation equipment and the provision of free allowances for new entrants. No decisions have yet been made.

Firearms

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many dealer-to-dealer licences have been issued to registered firearms dealers since 6 December 1996. [20694]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government issued three dealer to dealer (Dealer) Open Individual Export Licences (OIELs) to registered firearms dealers between 6 December and 31 December 1996. Information on the number of Dealer OIELs issued for the period 1 January 1997 to 31 December 2003 is available from the Government's Annual Reports on Strategic Export Controls. Information for the period 1 January 2004 to 30 June 2005 is available from the Government's Quarterly Reports. The Government's Annual Reports are available from the Libraries of the House, and our Quarterly Reports, from the DTI Export Control Organisation website, www.dti.gov.uk/export.control.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many households there were in each Government office region in each of the last five years; and how many of these were living in fuel poverty in each year. [20716]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures for the number of households in fuel poverty in England are produced from analysis of the English House Condition Survey. From 2003, the survey is being carried out on a continuous rolling basis. Prior to 2001, however, this survey was conducted on a five-yearly basis. Hence, the number of households in fuel poverty in each Government office region is not available for all of the last five years. The figures for 2001 and 2003 are available, as detailed in the following table.

Thousand

	2001		*2003*	
Government office region	*Total number of households*	*Number of fuel poor households*	*Total number of households*	*Number of fuel poor households*
North East	1,036	105	1,092	95
Yorkshire and Humber	2,118	238	2,090	180
North West	2,800	277	2,828	178
East Midlands	1,789	160	1,777	112
West Midlands	2,088	228	2,163	146
South West	2,062	201	2,136	139
East England	2,280	139	2,268	115
South East	3,343	224	3,359	149
London	2,993	148	3,011	108
Total	20,510	1,722	20,724	1,222

Notes:

1. All statistics in the tables are sourced from the English House Condition Surveys in 2001 and 2003, and therefore the number of households by region will differ slightly from official ODPM estimates.

2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Gas Imports

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of gas imported to the UK he estimates will come from Norway in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2015 and *(c)* 2020. [19727]

Malcolm Wicks: The current UK gas market arrangements are already delivering a number of gas import projects potentially delivering gas from such diverse sources as Norway, the Netherlands, Russia, Algeria, Qatar and other Liquefied Natural Gas exporter countries. By 2010, direct pipelines from Norway might have an import capacity of around 25 per cent. of the current UK peak gas demand. The proportion of future gas imports to the UK from Norway, and any plans to construct further pipeline connections, from Norway or elsewhere, will be matters for market participants to decide subject to necessary regulatory consents.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21297]

Alan Johnson: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in DTI's 2005 departmental report (Cm 6536). Specifically, the Budget report highlighted that the Department had achieved early delivery against its headcount reduction target, losing 560 posts by the end of 2004–05. The 2005 departmental report contains details of DTI's new ways of working resulting from its efficiency programme and plans for achievement of savings in 2005–06, and reported the early achievement of our target for 85 relocations by 2007–08.

Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance report (due to be published in December) and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21317]

Alan Johnson: As Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, I am responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

Home Heating

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the change in home heating costs in each year since 2000–01; and if he will make a statement. [21431]

Malcolm Wicks: Changes in home heating costs since 2000–01 are shown in the following table:

Average expenditure each week on fuel per consuming household[1,2] United Kingdom

	Electricity			Gas					
	All households	*Electric central heating*	*No electric central heating*	*All households*	*Gas central heating*	*No gas central heating*	*Heating oils and other fuels*	*Solid fuel*	*All fuels*
2000–01	6.55	9.33	6.26	6.51	6.80	4.15	14.10	8.31	12.79
2001–02	6.48	9.75	6.18	6.53	6.74	4.57	14.40	10.33	12.81
2002–03	6.47	9.47	6.20	6.56	6.75	4.38	12.74	10.21	12.73
2003–04	6.63	9.30	6.41	6.75	6.94	4.40	13.74	9.38	13.01

[1] Data is based on a survey and therefore sample sizes will vary from year to year, therefore lesser used fuels will have a greater sample error rate. Data shows average expenditure recorded in households consuming the specified fuel.
[2] Prices are in cash terms, unadjusted for inflation.
Source:
ONS Expenditure and Food Survey.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to ensure that funding allocations under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme begin in April 2006. [22211]

Malcolm Wicks: Several steps are being taken to ensure that the Programme will begin in April 2006. The detailed shape of the Programme is being developed in light of the recent consultation.

An OJEU notice was published on 4 October in order to contract a manager for the Programme and an application is being prepared for EU for State Aids clearance. An accreditation scheme is also being developed to run in parallel with the Programme for approval of products and installers.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when grant funding allocations under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme will begin; and if he will make a statement. [22424]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The new programme should start in April 2006, subject to EU state aids clearance.

Management Consultancies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which five management consultancies received the highest value of contracts awarded by his Department in each of the last three years; and what the total value was of the contracts awarded to each. [12574]

Alun Michael: The Department awards all contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations, based on best value for money. Central records show the following management consultancies as receiving the highest payments for management consultancy services in each of the last three financial years.

	£
2003–04	
Fujitsu Services Ltd.	241,380
KMC International	96,858
Whitehead Mann Group Plc	65,453
KPMG	53,332
Capita Business Services Ltd.	52,553
2004–05	
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP	575,712
MCI UK Ltd.	300,000
Status Communications Ltd.	218,419
Nicola J. Taylor	65,512
Pacec Ltd.	61,450
2005–06 (to date)	
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP	234,633
MCI UK Ltd.	150,000
Ernst & Young LLP	104,023
Status Communications Ltd.	93,454
MSD International	41,274

Miners' Compensation

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the efficiency of Capita as the agents for delivery of the compensation for widows and families of deceased miners. [20982]

Malcolm Wicks: Capita and the Department have an agreed efficiency improvement programme which is closely and regularly monitored. Improving the efficiency of the claims handling process is a key area for the Department.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid to Vendside employees for attending meetings with his Department since January 1999, in allowances and travel expenses. [20769]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Department has made payments totalling £6,310 to Vendside. This covers the costs of its employees

attending operational meetings with the Department to discuss generic claim handling issues on behalf of the UDM. This mirrors the costs paid to the Claimants' Group under the Claims Handling Agreements. Typically, Vendside employees would attend three meetings each year.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many coal health claims have been mediated by the Law Society since 2003; [23139]

(2) which cases in relation to which complaints have been made about charging under the coal health claims scheme have been referred to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal by the Law Society; and when each such referral was made. [23140]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* These are matters for the Law Society. The Department does not hold this information.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the consequences of Vendside Ltd. dropping beat knee claims for compensation from the Government. [23142]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Claimants who had lodged their claims with Vendside Ltd. may still be able to bring their claims if they contact solicitors urgently. It is unclear whether a further Group Litigation Order will be sought in due course but if not, individual claims will need to be brought at common law. The position may become clearer after a hearing on 11 November 2005.

Minimum Wage

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have been found to be paying their employees below the minimum wage in each year since its introduction; and what penalties were imposed. [22368]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

NMW records do not distinguish between employers that are companies, partnerships or sole traders. Details of the number of cases closed where non-compliance is identified are shown in the following table. The actual number of employers is slightly less than the number of cases because in a few instances there can be more than one case for the same employer.

	Cases closed where non-compliance was found	*Enforcement notices issued during the year*	*Penalty notices issued during the year*
1999–2000	1,280	136	1
2000–01	2,119	213	61
2001–02	1,937	61	65
2002–03	1,996	26	6
2003–04	2,211	45	3
2004–05	1,798	62	0

In the vast majority of cases the employer pays any minimum wage arrears without the need for any formal enforcement action. Where arrears are not paid, an enforcement notice will be issued setting out the arrears that are considered to be due. An employer will then have 28 days to lodge an appeal and subsequently have his case heard before an employment tribunal. If the appeal is not upheld or the enforcement notice has not been appealed against, the arrears become due. Where appropriate, a penalty notice can be issued for failure to comply with the enforcement notice.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to monitor whether companies are paying their employees below the minimum wage. [22369]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The Office for National Statistics estimates that the number of jobs paid below the minimum wage was 272,344 in April 2004. However, this estimate is based on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings which is not designed to monitor compliance with the minimum wage. The survey cannot separately identify workers such as apprentices, those undergoing training and those workers eligible for the accommodation offset, all of whom may legally be paid less than the minimum wage.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that those employers most at risk of paying their employees below the minimum wage are considered for NMW enforcement measures. Workers and others may register a complaint that the minimum wage has not been paid with the HMRC NMW Helpline. This will trigger an inquiry into the employer by one of the 16 locally based HMRC NMW enforcement teams. Other employers that are at risk of not complying with the minimum wage legislation are also visited by one of the enforcement teams to check they are compliant. These employers are selected using risk assessment when information from various sources, including from within HMRC and from other Departments, is considered.

Nuclear Power

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* his departmental officials have had with (i) the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and (ii) the nuclear industry trades unions in respect of the implications for the implementation of the NDA legacy management strategy of the potential sale of the British Nuclear Group. [20981]

Malcolm Wicks: Ministers have not specifically met the NDA or the trade unions to discuss the implications of a potential sale of British Nuclear Group for the implementation of the NDA's legacy management strategy. The possibility of a BNG sale has however arisen, in passing, during discussions that hon. Friend the Minister for Competitiveness has had with the trade unions on another matter. The views of both these stakeholders will be important when Ministers come to consider whether we should approve the proposed sale.

In preparing advice on the proposed sale of BNG, officials are holding discussions with the NDA, the trade unions and a range of other important stakeholders. Alongside safety and the likely effect on staff, the implications for the implementation of the NDA legacy management strategy will be a key consideration.

Oil

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on purchasing strategies for oil for intensive users of energy. [20322]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are concerned about the impact that high and volatile oil prices are having on UK companies and consumers and is working with the international community to promote greater stability in the global oil market. G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors met on the 23 of September 2005 and agreed the key steps that needed to be taken to this effect.

(see http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/otherhmtsites/g7/news/communique_280905.cfm).

Redundancies (Staffordshire)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what large-scale redundancies have occurred in North Staffordshire over the last four years. [21835]

Alun Michael: The Government Office for the West Midlands keeps a record of all redundancy announcements of which it becomes aware that involve the loss of at least 50 jobs within its region.

Since October 2001 the Government Office has recorded 37 such cases in North Staffordshire, which together were expected to involve the loss of almost 9,400 jobs. The largest of these were:

Company	*Location*	*Date of first redundancy*	*Number of jobs*
Waterford Wedgwood Johnson Brothers	Hanley and Tunstall	July 2003	1,085
Royal Doulton	Burslem	January 2005	591
Celastica	Kidsgrove	November 2002	510
Waterford Wedgwood	Stoke-on-Trent	December 2000	500
Celastica	Kidsgrove	December 2001	450
Celastica	Kidsgrove	September 2004	390
Royal Doulton	Baddeley Green	February 2002	370
Celastica	Kidsgrove	September 2003	350
Johnson Matthey	Stoke-on-Trent	February 2002	341
Celastica	Bradwell Wood	December 2001	308
Collins & Aikman Automotive Interiors	Newcastle-under-Lyme	August 2002	290
Michelin Tyre	Stoke-on-Trent	September 2002	280
Churchill China	Stoke-on-Trent	July 2003	273
Royal Doulton	Burslem	October 2001	267
Qualceram Shire	Stoke-on-Trent	July 2005	220
Vodaphone	Stoke-on-Trent	April 2005	200
Royal Doulton	Longton	December 2002	200
Royal Doulton	Burslem	December 2002	200

Renewable Energy

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure continuity of support and funding for the UK's renewable energy industry. [20517]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* The Government's main mechanism for supporting the renewable industry is the Renewables Obligation. The RO places an obligation on electricity suppliers to source an increasing proportion of their electricity sales from eligible sources of renewable energy. The RO will run until at least 2027 ensuring continuity of support and funding for the UK's renewable industry.

The RO is supported by around £500 million of spending between 2002–08 to help develop renewable and low carbon technologies.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grant funding for *(a)* solar thermal, *(b)* biomass, *(c)* solar photovolatics and *(d)* other renewable energy technologies his Department plans to put in place when the (i) Clear Skies and (ii) solar PV Major Demonstration programme comes to an end. [21395]

Malcolm Wicks: Grant funding support for solar thermal, biomass solar photovoltaics and other renewable technologies will continue after Clear Skies and the PV Demonstration programmes under the new Low Carbon Buildings programme. The micro generation strategy will also look to provide wider support by tackling some of the barriers currently hindering market development.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the installation level of solar photovoltaics in the UK was in 2004; and what assessment he has made of the levels on other countries which are signatories to the Kyoto Agreement. [21397]

Malcolm Wicks: The installed Photovoltaics generation capacity for the UK for 2004 was 2261 kW. Information on installed capacity in other countries including signatories to the Kyoto Agreement is available on the International Energy Agency (IEA) website www.iea-pvps.org—'Trends in Photovoltaic Applications/Survey Report of Selected DBA Countries'.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage private sector investment in *(a)* solar thermal, *(b)* solar photovolatics and *(c)* other micro-renewable technologies. [21398]

Malcolm Wicks: In developing the micro generation strategy due to be published in April 2006, we are considering ways to encourage private sector investment in relation to micro-renewable technologies.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department made of the impact on *(a)* jobs and *(b)* investment in

micro-renewables of the decision to end the (i) Clear Skies and (ii) Solar PV Major Demonstration programmes prior to the commencement of the Low Carbon Programme. [21670]

Malcolm Wicks: The Clear Skies and Solar PV Major Demonstration programmes have contributed to the development of the microgeneration industry in the UK, including an installer base. The Low Carbon Buildings Programme will continue to fund the installation of microgeneration products in household, community and large-scale projects. The microgeneration strategy will look at removing some of the wider barriers currently hindering market development.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when funding allocations under the solar PV Major Demonstration Programme will cease; when allocations under the proposed Low Carbon Buildings Programme will become available; what alternative funding is available in the period between the operation of the two programmes; what estimate he has made of the effects of a break in funding on the investment decisions of the solar PV industry; and if he will make a statement. [21781]

Malcolm Wicks: The Solar PV Major Demonstration Programme is due to end in March 2006 along with the Clear Skies programme (though spending to continue through to March 2007) and they will be replaced by the Low Carbon Buildings Programme which we aim to start in April 2006, subject to state aids clearance. This timing takes account of the need to minimize the break between programmes, which we well recognise.

Secondees

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether secondees to his Department are subject to Civil Service rules; and if he will make a statement. [21672]

Alan Johnson: Secondments are part of the Interchange Initiative that promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the Civil Service and other organisations.

All secondments into the Department follow the Civil Service Recruitment Code and have standard contractual terms and conditions in place, which are formally agreed with the secondee and their employer. These terms and conditions include clauses on duties and responsibilities during the secondment; the secondee is subject to the working arrangements, policies, procedures, rules and regulations applying to all staff of the Department.

All secondees into the Department are subject to the Official Secrets Act. They are also required to sign an undertaking that they will not disclose or make use of any information received in confidence during their secondment when they leave DTI.

Departmental Security Clearance is required for all secondees.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedures are in place in his Department to manage conflicts of interests that may arise from secondments from industry to his Department; and if he will make a statement. [21673]

Alan Johnson: All secondments into DTI have standard contractual terms and conditions in place, which are formally agreed with the secondee and their employer. These terms and conditions include clauses on conflict of interests and guidance on how to avoid potential conflict of interests.

If either the secondee or the organisation have or have had an interest in the relevant areas relating to the secondment, the Department will determine whether or not it would be appropriate for the secondee to take on the relevant responsibility on behalf of the Department.

In the event of an actual conflict of interest, the secondment would be terminated. This is in accordance with the contractual terms and conditions for the secondment.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedures are in place to ensure suitable supervision of secondees takes place by permanent members of staff with the Department; and if he will make a statement. [21674]

Alan Johnson: All secondees have a designated DTI line manager during their secondment; permanent members of the Departments' staff or its authorised representatives undertake line management responsibilities.

All secondments into the Department have standard contractual terms and conditions in place, which are formally agreed with the secondee and their employer. These terms and conditions include clauses on duties and responsibilities during the secondment; the secondee is required to be responsible to and act in accordance with the instructions only of the Department or its authorised representatives, reporting to the secondee's DTI line manager.

Solar Power

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with power companies on the retrofitting of solar power to existing buildings. [20249]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not discussed with power generation companies retrofitting of solar power to existing buildings.

Sustainable Development

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are planned for new advice for consumers within the framework of the Government's sustainable development strategy. [21505]

Malcolm Wicks: 'Securing the Future', the Government's sustainable development strategy, published March 2005, described our intention to develop a new information service provisionally called Environment Direct.

DEFRA are currently drawing up detailed plans for Environment Direct, but it is likely to be a consumer-focused online service that will give people information about the impacts of different goods and services and how to make the most sustainable consumption choices. We hope to have an initial version of Environment Direct in operation from late 2006.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of progress towards implementation of measures outlined in the last departmental sustainable development action plan; and what progress has been made against each target. [21511]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI was the first Government department to produce its own Sustainable Development Strategy in 2000. The strategy identified where DTI can most make a difference in delivering the Governments Sustainable Development (SD) goals.

Since 2000 we have focused on the priorities set out in the DTI SD Strategy, for example the Energy White Paper of 2003 set out four new goals for energy policy, including putting the UK on a path to cut carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by 2050.

Other priorities drawn out in the strategy were sustainable consumption and production (SCP), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and greening government. These have been taken forward through a number of initiatives—including publication in 2003 of "Changing Patterns—UK Government Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production" and the new commitments set out in chapter 3 of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy ("Securing the Future", of March 2005); the launch of the CSR Academy and the International Strategic Framework on CSR. Work on Greening Government is on-going.

SD is embedded in the DTI Business Plan, in objectives 4, 7 and 11.

The strategy is being superseded by the SD Action Plan that is currently being developed.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to publish the next departmental sustainable development action plan. [21512]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTIs Sustainable Development Action Plan is currently being developed.

This is in line with the commitments laid down in "Securing the Future; delivering UK sustainable development strategy", of March 2005, that all Government departments and their executive agencies produce focused sustainable development action plans based on the Strategy by December 2005. All Government departments will report against the commitments laid down in their action plans from December 2006.

Trade Policy

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the opportunities during the UK presidency of the European Union to improve the transparency and accountability of trade policy making within Europe; and if he will publish the *(a)* agenda, *(b)* attendance and *(c)* minutes of the meetings of the Article 133 committee. [20985]

Ian Pearson: The UK Presidency of the European Union has convened a number of specific meetings of the General Affairs Council and of trade Ministers informally with the express purpose of increasing transparency in the field of trade policy, particularly in relation to the Doha Development Agenda

The agendas of the Article 133 Committee are available on the website of the Council of the European Union and on the UK Presidency website. However, details of the persons attending meetings of the Article 133 Committee are not published, nor are there formal minutes of the Article 133 Committee.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will renegotiate the trade negotiation mandate of the European Commission in its presidency of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [20986]

Ian Pearson: The Commission is currently operating under a number of negotiating mandates for various trade dossiers, such as multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). These mandates are set by General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) conclusions. As Presidency, the UK chairs these GAERC meetings. The GAERC on 18 October reaffirmed the Commission's mandate for the current round of WTO negotiations, the Doha Development Agenda (DDA).

UK Trade and Investment Websites

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what cost-benefit analysis was undertaken for the recently launched UK Trade and Investment South West Forum for China Forum website. [21664]

Ian Pearson: No cost-benefit analysis was undertaken. The recommendation to develop this website was made by the China/South West England Steering Group, a private/public sector group. The website is a regional resource.

The website provides businesses in the South West access to information about China-related activities in the region and points businesses to a wide range of other resources that already exist. The aim is to assist companies to take advantage of the opportunities in China.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what co-ordination takes place with UK Trade and Investment to ensure that best practice is shared between different regional websites. [21665]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment has in place a number of measures to ensure effective best practice sharing on websites. Our regional teams in England have access to advice and guidance from our HQ marketing and website teams. Specifically we have an online tool for sharing best practice on corporate identity. This contains online branding guidelines as well as signposting to the Government website guidelines best practice.

UK Trade and Investment's Marketing and Communications team also host six- monthly working group meetings to share best practice. Discussion includes online activities. Furthermore, UK Trade and Investment's regional directors meet monthly, which provides a further opportunity for co-ordination.

Wind Farms

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many net units of electricity were exported to the grid by each operational wind farm in the United Kingdom in each of the last 12 months. [20826]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Information we do hold centrally is for electricity on an annual basis and covers the generation of electricity by all wind farms in the United Kingdom. In 2004, 1,736 GWh of electricity were generated by onshore wind farms and 199 GWh by offshore wind farms.

DEFENCE

Armoured Vehicles

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many appliqué armour kits to protect the undersides of vehicles his Department has available for *(a)* Land Rovers, *(b)* Saxons and *(c)* Scimitars. [21078]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Currently there are no appliqué armour kits available to protect the undersides of Land Rover and Saxon vehicles. 84 Scimitars have been fitted with appliqué armour and an Invitation to Tender has been issued for a further 100 sets to be manufactured and fitted over the next five years.

Astute Submarine

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the delivery schedule is for the Astute submarine; and what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* payment terms per unit are. [19446]

Mr. Ingram: The contract with BAE Systems is for three Astute class submarines.

HMS Astute, the first of class is due to enter service in 2009 followed by the second of class, HMS Ambush in 2010 and the third of class, HMS Artful in 2012.

The estimated cost at 31 March 2005 for the three boats is £3,492 million.

The current payment arrangements for the contract provide the contractor with reimbursement of its agreed costs in relation to their performance against the contract. To claim profit the contractor is required to achieve agreed milestones.

AWE Aldermaston

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department in each of the past five years on *(a)* running costs and *(b)* capital costs at AWE Aldermaston. [22020]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Atomic weapons establishment annual expenditure as at October 2005

£ million, 2005–06 prices

	Running costs	*Capital costs*	*Total*
2000–01	287	24	311
2001–02	244	47	291
2002–03	230	48	278
2003–04	235	65	300
2004–05	269	94	363

British Strategic Nuclear Deterrent

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the British strategic nuclear deterrent could be *(a)* targeted and *(b)* used without United States approval (i) at present and (ii) under plans for a successor system. [23607]

John Reid: The United Kingdom's independent nuclear deterrent can be targeted and used without the approval of any other country. No decisions on any replacement for Trident have yet been taken.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what stage in the current Parliament he expects to announce *(a)* whether the strategic nuclear deterrent will be replaced and *(b)* what type of successor system will be the preferred choice. [23608]

John Reid: It is likely that decisions on any replacement for Trident will be required in the current Parliament, but they are still some way off. It is therefore too early to speculate on a more precise decision-making timetable.

Chinooks

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects the Chinook Mark 3 helicopter, including the six aircraft delivered to the UK during 2001–02, to enter service before the planned phasing out of the Mark 2 and Mark 2a Chinooks. [21732]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is working towards resolving the problems of the eight Chinook Mk 3s. A study last year recommended a 'Fix to Field' solution as the probable best value for money solution. We are working with Boeing to ensure the proposed solution is mature and robust before taking the final decision on whether to proceed. If we do decide to proceed with the 'Fix to Field' solution I anticipate that the aircraft would be in service well before the Chinook Mk 2/2a fleet reaches its out of service date.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the airworthiness review of the Chinook HC2 helicopter was conducted; and if he will place a copy of the review in the Library. [21757]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the it hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 651–52W.

Combat Vehicles

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* expected withdrawal from service date and *(b)* possible total life expectancy of the

remaining CVR(T) vehicles including the Saxon are; and whether any upgrades of the vehicles are expected. [22353]

Mr. Ingram: The currently planned out of service dates (OSD) for all CVR(T) variants is 2014. On that basis their total in service life will be 42 years. However, OSDs can be subject to review at any stage, and if it is cost effective to maintain or update this capability the service life of some variants may be extended beyond this point.

All variants of CVR(T) are currently being upgraded with the Bowman communications and information system and close reconnaissance CVR(T) Scimitar is also receiving the Battlegroup Thermal Imaging system. Parts of the Scimitar fleet already have upgraded protection and there is a funded programme to upgrade the protection of more of the fleet.

Saxon is not a CVR(T) variant, but its currently planned OSD is also 2014, giving a total in service life of 30 years, although this OSD could also be reviewed. With the exception of modifications for specific operations, no upgrades are currently planned for Saxon.

Cut and Sew Contracts

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many visits have been made by his Department's personnel to the sub-contractors for the cut and sew contracts in China since the contract was awarded. [22309]

Mr. Ingram: As part of the cut and sew contract management plan, three visits have been made to sub contractors in China by officials accompanying the prime contractor, at the prime contractor's request.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many garments in each of the categories of the cut and sew contract were scheduled to be delivered in the first year of the contract; and how many from each category have been delivered. [22310]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is shown in the following table:

	Scheduled for delivery	*Actually delivered*
Category 1	510,048	462,185
Category 2	27,103	27,103
Category 3	113,211	110,179
Category 4	294,984	302,304
Category 5	43,100	43,100

Death Investigations

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of investigations into the deaths of *(a)* Captain Ken Masters and *(b)* Staff Sergeant Denise Rose. [22846]

Mr. Ingram: Inquiries into the deaths of Captain Masters and Staff Sergeant Rose have not yet been completed. It would be inappropriate to comment further while these inquiries are ongoing.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many defence contracts worth over £10 million his Department has awarded to *(a)* EU, *(b)* British and *(c)* United States firms in each of the last five years. [22252]

Mr. Ingram: The information is not held in the format requested.

Inoculations

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what inoculations are *(a)* necessary and *(b)* recommended for armed forces personnel before being deployed to Iraq; what the cost of each inoculation is per person; and what supplies of each inoculation are available to his Department. [21709]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The tables show the recommended inoculations that armed forces personnel should have as part of their overall recruitment process or routine in-service healthcare. Rabies and Hepatitis B vaccines are offered to personnel who are at occupational risk. Vaccinations are only administered after the individual has given informed consent, therefore, all vaccinations can only be deemed recommended for deployment. The costs of the immunisations have been calculated per person, per dose and include VAT:

Recruit/New service entrant immunisation schedule

Day	*Vaccine*	*Next Dose*	*Cost per person, per dose (£) including VAT*
1	Meningococcal conjugate C	None	1.13
1	Mumps, Measles, Rubella (MMR)	None	6.88
1	Low dose diphtheria/ Tetanus/ Inactivated Polio (Td/IPV)	10 yrs	10.90
25	BCG	None	6.46
42	Hepatitis A	6–12 months (then 10-yearly)	17.04
42	Typhoid	3 yrs	8.11
42	Yellow fever	10 yrs	20.85

Vaccine	*Booster Interval*	*Remarks*	*Cost per person, per dose (£) including VAT*
Routine in-service immunisation schedule			
Hepatitis A	10 yrs	A second dose, which completes the primary immunisation course, is to be given 6–12 months after the first dose or subsequently as the opportunity arises. (See Typhoid remarks)	17.04
Low dose diphtheria/ Tetanus/Inactivated Polio (Td/IPV)	10 yrs	—	10.90

Vaccine	Booster Interval	Remarks	Cost per person, per dose (£) including VAT
Typhoid	3 yrs	Where Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccines are required at the same time, the combined Hepatitis A/Typhoid vaccine is to be used.	8.11
Yellow fever	10 yrs	—	20.85
Anthrax voluntary immunisation programme			
Anthrax	1 yr (from 6 month booster)	3 Vaccines over a course of 6 weeks, followed by another 6 months after	124
Immunisations for those at special occupational risk			
Hepatitis B	5 yrs	1. After the primary course, seroconversion check required for healthcare workers. 2. Single booster dose 5 years after primary course. No further booster required thereafter.	8.00 to be offered to deploying personnel if at occupational risk of contact with human body fluids, e.g. medical and provost personnel
Rabies	2 yrs	If still indicated. The Rabies Vaccine cost is based on 3 × pre-exposure vaccines.	70.00 Recommended only for Veterinary staff and all personnel who work regularly with animals

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) holds sufficient doses of Medical Countermeasure products. The MOD buys vaccines against diseases from the commercial sector, on an as required basis, and from the Department of Health through standing agreements and in line with anticipated requirements.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of whether the armour-piercing improvised explosive devices being used against British forces in south-eastern Iraq originated *(a)* through Hizbullah and *(b)* in Iran; [20831]

(2) whether he has received credible evidence of Iranian Revolutionary Guard involvement in the insurgency in south-eastern Iraq. [20830]

John Reid: I have nothing more to add to the answer I gave on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 34, to the hon. Member for Reigate (Mr. Blunt) and on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 620, to the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mrs. Villiers).

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the present rules of engagement of UK forces and special forces in Iraq permit forces to operate over the border with Iran. [21013]

John Reid: No.

MAN Trucks

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the MAN trucks procured under the latest army truck contract will be suitable for *(a)* all weather conditions and *(b)* all geographical regions. [19435]

Mr. Ingram: The MAN truck contract is for the Support Vehicle fleet. The tracks have been designed to operate across a range of climatic conditions and in various geographic regions. These range from 58°C dry, desert conditions through to temperatures as low as −35°C. Additionally, 420 of the total fleet will be built to a standard so that they are capable of operating in temperatures as low as −56°C.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on maintenance of the UK's nuclear weapons in 2004–05. [19667]

John Reid: Since the Trident nuclear deterrent became operational in 1994, the annual expenditure for capital and running costs has ranged between 2 and 4 per cent. of the annual defence budget.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will seek to enable *(a)* debate and *(b)* votes in the House on allowing British bases to host US nuclear missiles. [19836]

John Reid: I am aware of no such proposals.

Oliver Devoti

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what disciplinary steps have been taken in response to the conviction of Fusilier Oliver Devoti for grievous bodily harm in Belfast on 16 September. [21525]

Mr. Ingram: It would be inappropriate to comment on the specific case of Fusilier Oliver Devoti as internal procedures are still in train. However, under The Queen's Regulations for the Army (Paragraph 9.404), a soldier will normally be discharged from the Army if he has been sentenced by a civil court to imprisonment.

Trident

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much it cost to store nuclear missiles for the Trident fleet in each of the last 10 years. [19061]

John Reid: A shared pool of US/UK missiles is maintained and stored in the United States. Under the Polaris sales agreement (amended for Trident) the United Kingdom contributes to the cost of processing the missiles. This includes a small element in respect of storage costs, which is not separately identified. The costs of the weapons handling and storage facilities of the Royal Navy armament depot, Coulport attributable to Trident are some £2 million per year.

Type 45 Destroyer

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* delivery schedule, *(b)* cost per vessel unit, *(c)* cost of weapon systems per unit and *(d)* payment terms per unit is for the Type 45 destroyer. [19442]

Mr. Ingram: The first Type 45 is expected to enter service during 2009. Subsequent vessels (of a planned eight ship class) are expected to follow at regular intervals between that point and the middle of the next decade.

The current estimated unit production cost of each Type 45 is £561.6 million, based on the currently approved programme of six ships. This includes the cost of the principal anti-air missile system (PAAMS), which is the primary weapons system for the Type 45 destroyer. Within the figure of £561.6 million the division between the unit production cost of the vessel and PAAMS is approximately in the proportion of two thirds to one third.

Payment for both ship and PAAMS is through achievement of contractually agreed programme milestones.

Vanguard

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has commissioned on the upgrading of the Vanguard Class submarine; and if he will make a statement. [21607]

John Reid: We have not commissioned any research on the upgrading of the Vanguard Class submarine platform.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Swan Hunter-built vessel Largs Bay *(a)* to be completed, *(b)* to be ready for sea trials and *(c)* to enter service. [20388]

Mr. Ingram: It is expected that Largs Bay, first of the two Swan Hunter Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) ships will be completed by March 2006, be ready for sea trials by January 2006 and enter service late in 2006.

TREASURY

Child Benefit

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have received child benefit in each of the Westminster constituencies in the Province in each of the last three years. [22627]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of families in receipt of child benefit and the number of children in these families for whom child benefit was received are shown in the table.

Child benefit recipients and their children in Northern Ireland

Thousand

Westminster parliamentary constituency	*31 August 2002*		*31 August 2003*		*31 August 2004*	
	Number of families	*Number of children in these families*	*Number of families*	*Number of children in these families*	*Number of families*	*Number of children in these families*
Belfast East	9.2	16.8	9.0	16.4	9.1	16.1
Belfast North	11.6	21.6	11.2	20.9	11.3	20.6
Belfast South	9.2	17.7	9.0	17.3	9.1	17.1
Belfast West	13.7	27.3	13.5	26.5	13.5	25.9
East Antrim	11.2	20.4	11.1	20.2	11.3	20.3
East Londonderry	11.6	22.4	11.3	21.8	11.6	21.8
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	11.4	23.6	10.3	21.1	10.7	21.6
Foyle	16.1	31.9	15.5	30.6	16.1	30.7
Lagan Valley	13.4	25.3	13.3	25.1	13.6	25.3
Mid Ulster	11.8	25.4	11.5	24.7	12.0	24.9
Newry and Armagh	14.0	29.1	13.5	28.1	14.0	28.3
North Antrim	13.3	25.5	13.1	25.2	13.5	25.5
North Down	10.4	18.9	10.2	18.3	10.3	18.4
South Antrim	13.4	25.1	13.4	25.1	13.7	25.3
South Down	14.3	29.6	14.1	29.2	14.7	29.6
Strangford	12.8	23.6	12.6	23.3	12.8	23.4
Upper Bann	14.1	27.4	14.0	27.0	14.4	27.2
West Tyrone	11.9	24.6	11.4	23.5	11.7	23.6
Northern Ireland Unidentified	2.6	n/a	7.8	15.5	3.5	10.1

n/a = not available

Condoms

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to remove the VAT from condoms; and if he will make a statement. [23553]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government keep all taxes under review and any changes are announced as part of the normal Budget process. However, under our agreements with our European partners, we are not able to extend our existing VAT zero rates or introduce any new ones.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated revenue was from VAT on condoms in each of the last five years. [23557]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs does not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services.

Customs and Excise (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people worked for HM Customs and Excise in Northern Ireland in each year between 1998 and 2004. [22889]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Customs and Excise do not maintain a record of the total number of people who worked for the Department during any one year. The full-time equivalent numbers of staff in post in Northern Ireland at 1 April in each of the years requested are:

As at 1 April each year	*FTE staff in post*
1998	581
1999	560
2000	548
2001	578
2002	574
2003	628
2004	694

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will seek to put in place a permanent dog detector deployment for Customs and Excise in Northern Ireland. [22892]

Dawn Primarolo: Throughout the UK, Customs seek to deploy their resources where they will have the greatest impact on international smuggling. Detector dogs are available to support frontier activity in Northern Ireland, but Customs experience so far suggests that the permanent location of detector dogs in Northern Ireland would not be the most effective use of these resources.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long each deployment of a detector dog team lasted in Northern Ireland since April 2004; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the deployments. [22893]

Dawn Primarolo: Since April 2004, there have been 14 deployments of detector dogs in Northern Ireland, as follows:

Length of deployment, including travelling time (days)	*Number of deployments*
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	5
6	3
7	1
15	1

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22465]

John Healey: The information is as follows.

	Energy consumption (weather corrected kwh)	*Energy spend (£)*
2000–01	10,094,672	674,288
2001–02	10,659,265	654,363
2002–03	15,745,199	786,735
2003–04	12,329,020	589,009
2004–05	12,126,079	799,037

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22287]

John Healey: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Gateshead East and Washington West constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment in Gateshead, East and Washington, West has fallen by 54 per cent. while both long-term youth and adult unemployment have fallen by over 90 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./

Direct Taxation

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of direct taxation was paid by women in the last period for which figures are available. [22667]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is provided in the table.

Source	*Percentage of tax paid by women*
Income Tax[1]	26.3
Capital Gains Tax[2]	26.9
Inheritance Tax[3]	60.9

[1] Based on 2002–03 survey of personal incomes (SPI) and projected in line with Budget 2005 assumptions.
[2] Based on capital gains reported on the 2003–04 self assessment (SA) return.
[3] Based on a 2001–02 sample of cases where an IHT liability arose on death.

Employees

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of employees were in the *(a)* public sector and *(b)* private sector, on the latest date for which figures are available, broken down by region. [22062]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Dennis MacShane, dated 31 October 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about public and private sector employment. [22062]

For countries and regions of the UK, the attached table shows estimates of the percentages of total employment in the public and private sectors. These figures, which cover the twelve months to June 2005, include self-employment in the private sector. They were published, on 28th October in the "Public Sector Employment Trends 2005" report which is available from the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=1293

Public and private sector employment by region and country of workplace; average of four quarters to June 2005

Percentage

	Public	*Private*	*All in employment*
North East	23.7	76.3	100
North West	21.5	78.5	100
Yorks and Humber	20.3	79.7	100
East Midlands	17.9	82.1	100
West Midlands	19.5	80.5	100
Eastern	18.6	81.4	100
London	19.0	81.0	100
South East	17.6	82.4	100
South West	20.4	79.6	100
England	19.5	80.5	100
Wales	23.3	76.7	100
Scotland	23.8	76.2	100
Great Britain	20.1	79.9	100
Northern Ireland	29.8	70.2	100
United Kingdom	20.3	79.7	100

Notes:

1. The figure for the United Kingdom is derived from estimates in the ONS Public Sector Employment Quarter 2 First Release (published 30 September 2005).
2. Northern Ireland data are based on information from the Quarterly Employment Survey and relate to the number of public sector jobs not the number of people working in the public sector. Data are expressed as a percentage of the total workplace employment level from the LFS in Northern Ireland. HM forces data are not included.
3. Figures for the regions and countries within Great Britain have been produced using estimates from the Labour Force Survey. These have been constrained to the total UK public sector employment total so that estimates are in-line with National Accounts definitions of the public sector.

Sources:

Labour Force Survey, returns from public sector organisations (ONS) and Quarterly Employment Survey (DETINI).

Enterprise Management Incentives

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to have completed the review of the Enterprise Management Initiative policy; and if he will make a statement. [22703]

John Healey: An evaluation programme has begun which aims to assess the economic impact and cost effectiveness of the Enterprise Management Incentives (EMI) against its stated policy objectives of helping smaller higher risk companies to recruit and retain the people they need to grow and succeed. With share options, the incentive clearly takes time to work because share prices need time to grow to generate gains for employees.

We are continually analysing EMI information received by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) from companies and their representatives. We also commission research from external contractors to gather further EMI evidence as part of the HMRC research programme. National statistics on EMI are annually updated on the HMRC website. Findings of qualitative research that gathered early evidence on the attitudes and experiences of companies using EMI are also available on the HMRC website. Based on these results, a more comprehensive quantitative study of the policy is planned for 2006–07.

Exotic Bird Imports

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many exotic birds have been imported into Northern Ireland in each of the last two years. [23994]

Dawn Primarolo: There have been no imports of exotic birds falling within tariff classification 0106 3200 (Psittaciforms, including parrots, parakeets, macaws and cockatoos) into Northern Ireland ports directly from non-EU countries within the last two years. It is not possible to identify the number of exotic birds imported into Northern Ireland ports indirectly via other UK ports, or from other EU countries.

Fuel Oil Tax (Northern Ireland)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much VAT was collected from the sale of fuel oil in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [22634]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not collect data on VAT for individual goods or services.

Income Tax

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people paid income tax in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion claimed tax relief for pension contributions; [23330]

(2) what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the Exchequer of limiting the value of pension contribution tax relief to the basic rate of income tax; [23339]

(3) what estimate he has made of the total value of pension contribution tax relief given to those above *(a)* median taxable incomes, *(b)* mean taxable incomes and *(c)* twice median taxable incomes in the last year for which figures are available. [23340]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: An estimate for the number of income tax payers and the proportion that claim relief on their contributions to approved pensions schemes is given in the following table.

Number of income tax payers and proportion that claim tax relief on their contributions to approved pension schemes

	2004–05
Number of individuals that pay income tax (Thousand)	30,100
Proportion that receive tax relief on their pension contributions (Percentage)	45

This distribution is based on the 2002–03 survey of personal incomes projected to 2004–05.

The estimated yield from restricting income tax relief on employee and self-employed pension contributions to the basic rate is £1.5 billion in 2004–05. The yield from restricting employer contributions is £3 billion. This estimate assumes that the proportion of total employer contributions relating to higher rate taxpayers is the same as that for employees. The estimates take no account of any behavioural effects that are likely to result from such rule changes. Nor do they account for any knock-on implications for the taxation of pension payments should full relief on contributions be withdrawn.

Estimates of the cost of tax relief on contributions to approved pension schemes are published on the HMRC website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/7_9_sep05.pdf

It is not possible to break these estimates down by taxable income bands.

Inheritance Tax

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of introducing a marginal rate of inheritance tax of 20 per cent. on estates valued above the zero-rate threshold and at less than £500,000; and if he will make a statement. [22560]

Dawn Primarolo: It would cost £935 million for the year 2005–06 if inheritance tax were charged at 20 per cent. on the band of value between the threshold and £500,000.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research his Department has commissioned into the effect on inheritance tax avoidance of reducing the rate of the tax; and if he will make a statement. [22561]

Dawn Primarolo: As with all taxes, policy on inheritance tax is continuously reviewed as part of the Budget process. Analysing the impact on avoidance of any change to policy is a key element of that process.

Manufacturing Sector

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to provide incentives to the UK manufacturing sector through the tax system. [22292]

John Healey: Since 1997, the Government have taken steps to improve the environment for all UK businesses—including manufacturer—by maintaining macroeconomic stability and implementing microeconomic reforms to remove barriers to efficient and flexible markets. The UK now has the lowest rate of corporation tax since its introduction. A number of other measures have also delivered improvements for the manufacturing sector through the tax system. In addition to 40 per cent. first year allowances for investments in plant and machinery by small and medium sized enterprises, the Government has introduced 100 per cent. first year allowances for investments in designated energy-saving plant and machinery. The introduction of R and D tax credits has also already led to claims of over £1.3 billion, delivering important Government support for research and development in innovative UK manufacturers and other firms.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to encourage investment in research and development in the manufacturing sector. [22294]

John Healey: The Government published a 10-year Science and Innovation Investment Framework in July 2004, which set out our ambition for total public and private investment in R&D to reach 2.5 per cent. of GDP by 2014. Stimulating increased business investment in R&D is crucial to achieving this ambition, including in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for $\frac{3}{4}$ of all business R&D expenditure in the UK.

The Government have put in place a range of policies to encourage business investment in R&D, which deal with the full spectrum of business activity, both manufacturing and services, rather than targeting specific industries or sectors. These include:

The introduction of R&D tax credits which has already led to claims of over £1.3 billion, delivering important Government support for research and development in innovative UK manufacturers and other firms.

The DTI's Technology Strategy—competitive funding worth £370 million over 2005–08, for business-led collaborative research in key emerging technologies;

The Small Business Research Initiative—now requiring Government Departments and agencies to place at least 2.5 per cent. of their extra-mural research contracts with SMEs.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on financial measures to assist *(a)* the manufacturing sector and *(b)* British business. [22295]

John Healey: The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, meet regularly to discuss a range of issues including the Government's policies to support manufacturing in particular, and British business more widely.

Marginal Deduction Rates

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 79W, on marginal deduction rates, what estimate he has made of the total cost of passported benefits in the latest year for which figures are available; and how many people received them. [23584]

Dawn Primarolo: The policy on the provision of passported benefits, the costs of providing them and the number of people benefiting are matters for the individual Government Department, local authority or devolved Administration which provides them. The information is therefore not held by HM Treasury

Pension Funds

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of allowing tax free lump sums to be taken from pension funds on retirement; and if he will make a statement. [22772]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimates of the cost of tax relief on approved pension schemes are published on the HMRC website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/7_9_ sep05.pdf

The estimate of the cost of tax relief on lump sum payments from all approved pension schemes is provided in footnote 15 of Table 7.9 .

Research and Development

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much businesses have received under the research and development tax credits scheme in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland in each year since they were introduced. [22659]

John Healey: The cost of R&D tax credit support claimed by companies in the UK is given in the table. The information requested is not available for Scotland.

	R&D tax credit support claimed (£ million)
2000–01	[1] —
2001–02	70
2002–03	380
2003–04	560
2004–05	290
2005–06	90
Total	1,380

[1] Negligible

Note:

Figures are on a receipts basis and rounded to the nearest £10 million.

Sustainable Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department is on target *(a)* to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1 per cent., *(b)* to recycle or recover 50 to 60 per cent. of waste and *(c)* to reduce water usage to 7.7 cubic metres per person as set out in the Sustainable Development Report and Action Plan 2005. [23390]

John Healey: The Treasury is on target.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer hat plans for energy reduction have been put in place in his Department since the publication of the Sustainable Development Report and Action Plan 2005. [23391]

John Healey: Energy reductions have been made following changes to the operation of the lighting systems in 1 Horse Guards road.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures came into effect which allowed tax credit helpline staff to track individual cases in the system. [18256]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* Helpline staff have access to the entire tax credit computer system, allowing them to view whether a claim has been accepted for payment, the amount of the entitlement and when the next payment is due.

Notes made on the computer system record contact with claimants, whether in writing, by telephone or in person. These notes provide advisers with a record of the contact history for use when a claimant telephones the Helpline.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of new tax credit *(a)* claims, *(b)* renewals and *(c)* changes of circumstance were processed accurately in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04, (iii) 2004–05 and (iv) 2005–06 to date; and if he will make a statement. [19283]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 698W.

HM Revenue and Customs will report against its target for 2004–05 and 2005–06 to decide the number of tax credit new claims, changes of circumstances and renewals accurately in its annual reports for those years in due course.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a draft of the new Tax Credit Award Notices to be sent out from April 2006; and if he will make a statement. [19297]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 53W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons his estimate of tax credit overpayments in 2003–04 has risen to £2.2 billion; and if he will make a statement. [19857]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on the Floor of the House to the hon. Members for St. Albans (Anne Main) and East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 428.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases tax credit claimants have been incorrectly *(a)* awarded and *(b)* paid the severe disability element of working tax credits due to their being in receipt of the higher mobility rather than the higher care rate of disability living allowance. [21818]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

HMRC carry out compliance checks on all aspects of tax credit claims, including entitlement to the severe disability element.

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been overpaid to tax credit recipients in Hemel Hempstead constituency in 2004–05. [23021]

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been overpaid to tax credit recipients *(a)* in the Strangford constituency and *(b)* in each Westminster constituency in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [22631]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 321W. Estimates of numbers and values of overpayments or underpayments for 2004–05 awards at 5 April 2005 will not be available until after family circumstances and incomes for 2004–05 have been finalised.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been overpaid to tax credit recipients in the Kettering constituency in each year since tax credits were introduced; and how many tax credit recipients were involved. [23193]

Dawn Primarolo: For figures on tax credits that are repayable for recipients in Kettering constituency I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on the 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 322W.

Estimates for 2003–04 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics. Finalised Annual Awards 2003–04". This publication and provisional estimates for the number of in-work families with tax credit awards as at selected dates in 2004–05 are available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-quarterly-stats.htm

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claimants have made incorrect claims for *(a)* working tax credits and *(b)* child tax credits in the Kettering constituency since these tax credits were introduced. [23194]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the savings that will result from the phasing out of payment of tax credits through employers; and how many people will be affected. [23685]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the savings and the number of people affected by the phasing out of payment of tax credits via employer can be found in "Regulatory Impact Assessment. The abolition of payment of Working Tax Credit via employers". This can be found on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ria/index.htm.

Taxation Levels (Competitiveness)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the level of taxation on the competitiveness of British businesses; and if he will make a statement. [22293]

John Healey: The UK continues to have a relatively lightly taxed economy, with a ratio of tax to GDP that ranks below both the OECD and EU15 averages, including now the lowest rate of corporation tax since its introduction. Furthermore, international studies show that the UK is a good place to do business. A range of factors affect the competitiveness of the business environment, and the Government have introduced a range of measures to enhance the five drivers of productivity and growth, such as the R and D tax credits to encourage innovation. The UK also has an impressive record of macroeconomic stability and resilience over the last decade, and some of the most flexible labour and product markets in the developed world.

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment has been in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire, *(c)* the West Midlands and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [22157]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Brian Jenkins, dated 31 October 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment. (22157)

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers of unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 who were resident in the Tamworth Parliamentary Constituency, Staffordshire, the West Midlands region and the UK. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 1997 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Table 2, attached, shows the annual average number of ISA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Tamworth constituency, Staffordshire, the West Midlands region and the UK for 1997 to 2004.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Number of unemployed, aged 16 to 24, resident in the Tamworth constituency, Staffordshire, West Midlands Government Office Region and UK

Thousand

12 months ending	*Tamworth*	*Staffordshire*	*West Midlands*	*UK*
February:				
1997	[1]	8	68	684
1998	[1]	7	57	616
1999	1	5	56	583
2000	[1]	6	51	556
2001	[1]	5	57	535
2002	[1]	3	49	525
2003	1	4	57	553
2004	2	6	58	557
March:				
2005	1	6	58	559

[1] Disclosive sample size (less than three).

Note:

The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:

Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Tamworth constituency, Staffordshire, West Midlands Government Office Region and UK

Annual averages	*Tamworth*	*Staffordshire*	*West Midlands*	*UK*
1997	505	3,990	38,235	406,415
1998	430	3,360	32,540	339,000
1999	415	3,080	29,965	294,125
2000	370	2,725	27,490	261,470
2001	325	2,575	25,370	241,220
2002	315	2,470	24,825	242,930
2003	310	2,370	26,265	249,055
2004	290	2,135	25,215	235,910

Note:
Computerised claims only. Data rounded to nearest 5 for disclosure control.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

North Sea Oil Revenues

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what revenues his Department expects to receive from North sea oil for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [22312]

John Healey: Based on NAO audited assumptions in 2005 North sea oil and gas production revenues of £7.1 billion were projected for 2005–06 in this year's Budget (see table C8 of the 2005 report). Updated estimates will be included in the next pre-Budget report.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by the Commission; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22573]

Nick Harvey: The Commission is not sponsoring any formal consultations.

Parliamentary Estate (Motion Sensors)

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many lights in *(a)* offices and *(b)* public spaces on the parliamentary estate are activated by motion sensors; and how many of these are set to turn on only when activated by motion. [23445]

Nick Harvey: The information is as follows:

(a) No office lights are activated by motion sensors. Experience has shown that the irregular working patterns of Members and staff make the use of motion sensors in office areas impractical.

(b) In public areas of the Palace some 20 per cent. of corridors and lavatories have motion sensors. They have recently been installed in the underground car park lift lobbies at levels 2–5. The sensors turn off lights when there is no motion for a set period. Elsewhere on the parliamentary estate there are movement sensor controls in the corridors at 7 Millbank and the Norman Shaw Buildings which turn off the lights when there is no movement. 1 Parliament Street and 1 Derby Gate have lighting control systems, which dim the lights in the corridors and common parts.

Parliamentary Information Management System

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission whether the Parliamentary Information Management System search engine is to be made available to the public on the parliamentary internet site. [22545]

Nick Harvey: Decisions on whether the Parliamentary Information Management System search engine is to be made available to the public on the parliamentary internet site will be taken in the wider context of the production of the business case for the radical upgrade of the site recommended by the Modernisation Committee in its first Report of Session 2003–04 (HC 368) 'Connecting Parliament with the Public', and subsequently endorsed by the Commission in its reply to the Committee, and by the House on 26 January 2005. That business case is due to be completed by December 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

7. **Ms Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to make it easier to claim council tax benefit. [22508]

Mr. Plaskitt: We want support to be as automatic as possible for everyone entitled to council tax benefit, but pensioners are our first priority.

The Pension Service is already telephoning existing customers nationwide who do not appear to be getting council tax benefit and filling in a simple three page claim form on their behalf. All the customer has to do is sign it and send it to their local authority and we have already issued nearly 10,000 (9,957) such forms.

And, from December the Pension Service will take council tax benefit claims over the phone at the same time as new Pension Credit claims.

Child Support Agency

16. **Mark Pritchard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency about the Agency's strategic plan. [22521]

Mr. Plaskitt: I and Ministerial colleagues regularly meet the Agency's Chief Executive, Stephen Geraghty. And, as my right hon. Friend mentioned in response to an earlier question, Stephen Geraghty is in the process of reporting back on his fundamental review of the Agency's operations and service delivery.

Older Workers

17. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received on discrimination against older workers. [22522]

Margaret Hodge: We have received about 20 letters since 1 April 2005 concerning age discrimination against older workers.

In addition we have participated in several meetings and events, including our recent Pensions Debate, in which older worker issues and the forthcoming age discrimination regulations have been discussed.

Benefit Claimants

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many mentally ill people there are on incapacity benefit; and how many unemployed people there are on jobseeker's allowance; [18796]

(2) how many people have claimed incapacity benefits on the grounds of poor mental health in each of the last five years. [18834]

Mrs. McGuire: As at September 2005 there were 847,600 people claiming jobseeker's allowance in Great Britain. The most recent available incapacity benefits information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants with a diagnosis under the 'Mental and Behavioural Disorders' category, Great Britain

As at February each year	*Number*
2001	887,000
2002	934,300
2003	979,800
2004	1,020,000
2005	1,043,300

Notes:

1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).
3. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Council Tax

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of pensioners in Gravesham who have experienced increases in their council taxes since 1977 who are living in poverty. [20001]

Mr. Timms: It is not possible to state the number of pensioners in Gravesham whose income is below 60 per cent. of median household income because data is only collected at the regional level.

There are 3,915 recipients of the guarantee element of pension credit in Gravesham with weekly average award of £40.58, all of whom are entitled to 100 per cent. council tax rebate. Data on council tax rebate recipients are only available at the Government Office Region level.

Customer Management System

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what training needs have been identified for staff in Customer Management System on proposed changes to disability benefits; and what discussions on training have taken place with staff; [19273]

(2) what the rate was of *(a)* early retirement and *(b)* resignation on grounds of stress and ill health in Customer Management System in each of the last two years in each region and country of the UK; [19274]

(3) how many incidents of violence against staff working in Customer Management System have been reported in each of the last two years in each region and country of the UK expressed as a ratio of whole-time equivalent employees; [19275]

(4) what percentage of days were lost through sickness absence in Customer Management System in each of the last two years in each region and country of the UK; [19276]

(5) what the rate of staff turnover in the Customer Management System was in each of the last two years in each region and country of the UK. [19277]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 31 October 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the Customer Management System. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Your first question asked what training needs have been identified for staff working on the Customer Management System in relation to proposed changes to disability benefits, and what discussions on such training have taken place with those staff. In common with other policy or process changes, a learning needs analysis will be conducted once the nature of any changes to incapacity benefits has been finalised. This will ensure that any functionality changes to the Customer Management System will be covered by an appropriate learning solution. During the development of the learning solution, the staff who use the System will be consulted to ensure the training modules meet all the learning needs.

The Customer Management System is one of a number of IT systems Jobcentre Plus uses in the delivery of services to our customers. The system is not used by all of our staff. Whilst we do collect staff information of the type sought in your questions, for example on sickness absence and staff turnover, this information is not collected or kept separately for those of our staff who work with the System and those who do not.

I hope this is helpful.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for reform of incapacity benefit. [22511]

Margaret Hodge: We have already published our Principles of Welfare Reform and our strategy for the health and well-being of people of working age, 'Health, Work and Well-Being—caring for our future'.

A Welfare Reform Green Paper will be published shortly.

Pensions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he plans to publish further research on women and pensions. [22504]

Mr. Timms: We will be publishing the latest research later this week.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with the Pension Commission on pensions. [22516]

Mr. Timms: I have discussions from time to time with the Pensions Commissioners on issues within their remit.

The Commission is due to publish its final report on 30 November. This will provide an independent view of the long-term pensions challenges posed by increasing longevity and an ageing society.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the responsibilities of his Department in relation to public sector pensions reform. [21560]

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry regarding the reform of public sector pensions. [22500]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions has no responsibilities in relation to Public Sector Pensions Reform.

Overall responsibility for Public Sector Pensions lies with HM Treasury, because of the long term funding issues involved. Responsibility for the details of each scheme rests with the relevant public sector employer—for example, the Department for Education and Skills is responsible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

In April, the Prime Minister asked the then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, supported by the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, to lead discussions with the public service trade unions on issues affecting the public sector schemes. My right hon. Friend took this responsibility with him when he moved to the Department for Trade and Industry.

Barbara Follett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he is planning to have with the Minister for Women about women's pensions. [22515]

Mr. Timms: Later this week we will be publishing a report on women and pensions, providing the latest analysis and projections of future pension entitlement for women.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for Women has been kept informed of the analysis in this report. She will also be joining DWP Ministers at a National Pensions Debate event next week, where we will be discussing these issues with a range of key stakeholders and members of the public.

WALES

Departmental Electricity

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of electricity used by buildings in *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies has come from renewable sources in each year since 1997. [18137]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Since 2003–04 at least 10 per cent. of all electricity supplied to the Department of Constitutional Affairs comes from renewable sources. Information for the Wales Office could not be made available except at a disproportionate cost.

Information for years previous to 2003 is not held.

Departmental Stationery

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what percentage of *(a)* copying paper and *(b)* paper for printed publications used by the Department in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05 was from recycled sources; and how much post-consumer waste this paper contained; [18465]

(2) what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all copying paper bought by the Department is 100 per cent. recycled with a minimum of 75 per cent. post-consumer waste content; and by what date this target is expected to be achieved; [18466]

(3) what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all paper for printed publications bought by the Department is 60 per cent. recycled, of which a minimum is 75 per cent. post-consumer waste; and by what date this target is expected to be achieved. [18467]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003, The Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

Information from 2003–04 is not held by Department.

For internal printing and copying, 2004–05 figures show that the Department uses a standard paper manufactured from 100 per cent. recycled paper, 13.6 per cent. meeting 75 per cent. post consumer waste specification. 2004–05 figures show that paper for printed publications has minimum 60 per cent. recycled content, 5.2 per cent. of this meets the 75 per cent. post consumer waste specification.

Procurement ensure that contracts for copy and publication paper are awarded to suppliers who are able to meet the given targets set on 1 November 2003.

These targets are under review. Findings will be available towards the beginning of financial year 2006–07.

Energy Efficiency

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what targets he has for improving energy efficiency in his Department; and how he intends to achieve these targets. [18136]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). The DCA has a commitment to source at least 10 per cent. electricity from renewable sources by 31 March 2008. This has been achieved for the last two years.

The Wales Office shares the DCA targets for improving energy efficiency, which can be found on the following link

http://www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm#part5

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Big Lottery Fund (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list projects from the Hemel Hempstead constituency area that were unsuccessful in applications for grants from the Big Lottery Fund in the last two years; and for what reason each application was refused. [22741]

Mr. Caborn: I have been given the information shown in the following table by the Big Lottery Fund:

Applicant name	*Project name*	*Reason for rejection*
Unnamed individual	Heroes Return	Big Lottery Fund working with the Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations (COBSEO) decided that, based on the details supplied, the applicant did not fit the agreed criteria of the scheme.
Leverstock Green Village Association	To build a secure play area for children	(1) From the information provided Big Lottery Fund determined the project was not well costed. The Fund does not make grants to projects unless the project budget is accurate and represents good value for money. (2) The options appraisal supplied required more evidence.
South Hill Centre	To provide a building for the permanent facilities	The options appraisal supplied required more evidence.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much energy has been consumed by her Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22458]

Mr. Lammy: The Department's energy consumption and expenditure are shown in the following table. Data on fuel consumption for the years prior to 2004–05 are not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Data on fuel costs for the years prior to 2004–05 are, in some cases, based on estimated meter readings.

Although, for the reasons stated, data on energy costs for 2004–05 are not strictly comparable with those for previous years the downward trend in energy costs reflects the Department's decisions to review its fuel-purchasing policies and to implement the recommendations of a DEFRA-sponsored energy audit.

Financial year	*Consumption, KWH*	*£ inc VAT*
Gas		
2000–01	n/a	58,532
2001–02	n/a	58,784
2002–03	n/a	59,503
2003–04	n/a	52,015
2004–05	2,643,861	45,022
Electricity		
2000–01	n/a	283,931
2001–02	n/a	273,750
2002–03	n/a	276,019
2003–04	n/a	253,616
2004–05	4175,443	224,929

Departmental Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on rebranding her Department and related agencies since 2003–04. [18119]

Mr. Lammy: The Department has had a zero spend on rebranding since 2003–04. Information on rebranding spend by related agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many consultants for which her Department is responsible employed in *(a)* museums, *(b)* historic palaces, *(c)* parks, *(d)* galleries and *(e)* heritage sites have become permanent members of staff following the end of their contract in each of the past five years. [21154]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS does not hold such information. Recruitment is an individual matter for the sectors mentioned and not the responsibility of the Department. No consultants have been employed after expiry of their contracts as permanent members of DCMS staff from the areas mentioned.

Digital Television

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the *(a)* maximum, *(b)* minimum and *(c)* average cost per household of switching to digital television. [19774]

James Purnell: Digital terrestrial set-top boxes are available for less than £40. Detailed estimates of the range of consumer costs per household were set out in the Regulatory and Environmental Impact Assessment: the timing of digital switchover. This was published on 16 September 2005 and copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses this week.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on advertising and promotion of the switch from analogue to digital services in each of the last five years for which records are available. [18329]

James Purnell: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport spent nothing until financial year 2004–05 when £170,000 was spent on promotion. In 2005–06 the total budget will be £320,000.

Licensing Act

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimates her Department has made of the number of licensed premises in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Cardiff whose applications will not have been processed by 24 November; and if she will make a statement. [18969]

James Purnell: Information on the number of applications that have been made by licensees for converting their existing licence or for new licences is not held centrally but can be obtained from local authority licensing departments. From our latest survey of a sample of licensing authorities we estimate that 98 per cent. of all premises that will need to be licensed under the 2003 Act have made an application. We believe that, by 24 November, only 1 or 2 per cent. of premises who want a licence will not have applied in time for the new regime coming in effect, and this will include many who do not need a licence such as takeaways that do not open after 11.30 or operators whose activities are seasonal and who will not, therefore, require a licence in November.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to local authorities on dealing with applications for premises licences for open arenas. [21375]

James Purnell *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Guidance to licensing authorities on how to carry out their licensing functions is issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. Paragraphs 5.127 to 5.129 and 7.74 to 7.78 of the guidance are particularly relevant to large scale temporary events requiring premises licences, major art and pop festivals, carnivals, fairs and circuses, many of which take place in open arenas. The guidance also refers to guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive and other bodies covering risk assessment, the safe management of crowds, event safety, and related issues. My officials also have regular discussions with LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators or Regulatory Services) about specific licensing issues, including some that are relevant to open arenas such as requirements for plans. LACORS gives advice and disseminates information to licensing authorities as a result of those discussions.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance her Department has issued to local authorities on whether councils may publicise licensing applications made under the Licensing Act 2003 to the general public; and if she will make a statement. [18201]

James Purnell: The advertising of applications for licences under the Licensing Act 2003 is not a matter of guidance but a matter of primary and secondary legislation. Under the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005 (2005 No. 42) applicants are required to display prominently at their premises for 28 days a notice about the application where it can be conveniently read from the exterior of the premises. They must also publish a notice in a local newspaper, or if there is none, in a local newsletter, circular or similar document circulating in the vicinity of the premises on at least one occasion during the period of ten working days following the giving of the application to the relevant licensing authority.

The 2003 Act also requires that licensing authorities must place details of applications on its licensing register which must be available and accessible to the public. There is nothing in the 2003 Act which prevents licensing authorities themselves from taking supplementary action to bring applications to the attention of individuals living in the vicinity of the premises concerned if they consider it necessary, but this is a matter for them to decide in the light of local circumstances.

We are committed to monitoring closely how the new regime operates in practice and this will include looking at evidence about the effectiveness of requirements such as those on the advertising of applications. Where the evidence suggests that elements of the system could be more effective, we will consider revisions to the guidance or, if necessary, asking Parliament to amend the legislation.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she plans to use statistics on incidents on or in the vicinity of licensed premises that result in *(a)* crimes or violence reported to the police, *(b)* ambulance call outs and *(c)* accident and emergency department attendances in her assessment of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [21133]

James Purnell *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* A number of measures are being drawn upon to assess the impact of the Licensing Act on levels of crime and disorder in England and Wales.

These include the use of national surveys including (but not limited to) data on alcohol related crime from the British Crime Survey. These national measures will be supplemented by local area case studies in five police force areas in England. These local case studies will look at patterns of recorded crime and disorder in relation to licensed premises and extended hours. This work will also include surveys of local residents and a range of businesses, including licensees, that may potentially be affected. The work will establish a baseline against which any change can subsequently be measured.

It is intended to supplement this exercise in the five areas with information from ambulance call-out statistics and accident and emergency departments, and the Home Office are currently engaged in discussion with the Department of Health on the feasibility of this issue. The Home Office are leading on this work, in consultation with other Government Departments including the Departments of Health, and Culture Media and Sport.

London Olympics

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many compulsory purchase orders the Government expects to make for land to be used for the 2012 Olympic Games sites. [22946]

Mr. Caborn: The Government expect that two compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) will be made. A CPO for the undergrounding of the powerlines going across the Olympic site has already been made (10 October 2005) and the London Development Agency (IDA) intends to make a further CPO for the acquisition of land for the regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley, Olympic Park and legacy developments.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she plans to publish the funding plan for the Olympics agreed by the Government, the Lottery regulator and the Lottery operator. [22236]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* We made our plans clear in our response to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, "A London Olympic Bid for 2012" published in June 2003 (HC 268). They provide for up to £1.5 billion of lottery funds for the London Olympics.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Department has spent on external media relations in each month of the last year. [14680]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows.

October 2004 to October 2005:

£17,000 a month for each month except June and July 2005 when the spend was £29,000 a month.

Ofcom (Employee Salaries)

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many employees of Ofcom earn £100,000 or more a year; and what the job title is of each. [22850]

James Purnell: Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. All disclosed remuneration information is contained in Ofcom's Annual Report and Accounts, published in July 2005. Copies are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Premier League (TV Rights)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had since May with the European Commission on deciding the structure of Premier League television broadcasting rights from season 2007–08 onwards. [20317]

Mr. Caborn: Ministers and officials from this Department are in contact with the European Commission and will continue to remain so in order to facilitate an agreement which is good for football, good for the fans and in the public interest.

However, as with all competition matters, these issues are for the independent regulatory authorities and the Government have made clear that this is a competition issue in which the Government have no locus to intervene.

Public Art

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effect on local communities of art displayed in public places. [21941]

Mr. Lammy: The display of public art can play a vital role in urban and rural regeneration helping to foster a sense of local identity and pride, to encourage community collaboration and cohesion, as well as to enhance the physical environment and make places into arts destinations in their own right.

High quality public art brings great benefits, including a sense of place to public spaces, especially in new or regenerated areas. Landmark new public art can be controversial, but given time, as numerous examples demonstrate, it often becomes much loved.

Royal Mail (Rosewall Sculpture)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on Royal Mail's planned auction of the Rosewall Sculpture. [21938]

Mr. Lammy: Barbara Hepworth is one of the 20th century's most important sculptors and this is a significant work by her. I believe that public art makes a major contribution to the enrichment of a town often attracting visitors and engendering a sense of pride among local residents.

I understand that this local landmark is considered to be a significant part of Chesterfield's cultural and social heritage and I am aware that the Royal Mail is reconsidering whether an auction is the most appropriate course of action.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussion she has had with the chairman of the Royal Mail Group plc regarding the auction of the Rosewall Sculpture. [21939]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has had no discussions with the chairman regarding the auction of the Rosewall Sculpture.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contribution of the public display of the Rosewall Sculpture in Chesterfield toward meeting her Department's aim to improve the quality of life for all through cultural activities. [21940]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has made no specific assessment of the impact of the Rosewall Sculpture on the local area.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to prevent Royal Mail's sale of the Rosewall Sculpture and its permanent departure from Chesterfield. [21942]

Mr. Lammy: I am aware that the Royal Mail has reconsidered its decision to auction the piece. I understand that Chesterfield borough council is now looking at ways in which it can ensure that the sculpture remains in the town and has been in contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss funding.

Special Olympic Movement

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assistance her Department gives to the Special Olympic Movement. [23169]

Mr. Caborn: At present, Special Olympics Great Britain does not receive direct assistance from DCMS nor the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS). However, we are exploring ways in which mainstream disability sport and Mencap Sport (a key partner of EFDS which does receive Exchequer funding through Sport England) can work more closely with the movement.

DCMS has a PSA target of increasing the take-up of sporting opportunities by people aged 16 and above from priority groups by 3 per cent. by 2008. These priority groups include people with a physical or mental disability.

Supermarket Licences

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many 24-hour licences have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused to supermarkets since implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [18662]

James Purnell: Such information is not held centrally. Licensing authorities are responsible for administering and enforcing the new licensing regime. Information on licences and applications in each area should be available from them individually.

Sustainable Development

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what account of sustainable development her Department requires to be taken by its *(a)* executive agencies, *(b)* advisory non-departmental bodies, *(c)* executive non-departmental bodies, *(d)* tribunals, *(e)* public corporations and *(f)* other bodies. [21840]

James Purnell: The Department's Sustainable Development Strategy was published in February 2004. This includes the Sustainable Development Policy Statement, which applies to all parts of the Department, its functions, management and staff and is commended to DCMS agencies and Non-Departmental Bodies, as a basis for developing similar statements of their own. Copies of the strategy are available from the Library of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Asian Earthquake

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action his Department is taking to help UK citizens find out whether family members resident in Pakistan, India or Afghanistan have been affected by the recent earthquake in the region. [23074]

Dr. Howells: Since the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October the Government have taken a number of measures to assist British nationals trying to find information on their relatives' whereabouts. A 24-hour helpline was set up at the British High Commission in Islamabad, a reception desk was set up at Islamabad airport, staffed for all incoming international flights until 17 October, and a consular team was dispatched to Muzaffarabad on 9 October to liaise with British nationals and local authorities in the worst affected areas. A consular presence was maintained in Muzaffarabad until 15 October. Since then our Honorary Consul, resident at Mirpur, together with consular staff at the British High Commission in Islamabad continue to pursue any missing person cases with local authorities.

Burma

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he supports the findings of the recent Havel report proposing United Nations Security Council intervention in Burma. [22220]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have studied the report entitled "Threat to the Peace: A Call for the UN Security Council to Act in Burma", commissioned by Vaclav Havel and Desmond Tutu. We fully support any action in the UN Security Council which would help promote reform and positive change in Burma.

We agree that the UN has a vital role to play in Burma. We strongly support the UN Secretary General's efforts to promote national reconciliation in Burma; as well as the work of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in Burma; [22221]

(2) what steps he is taking to encourage the restoration of democracy in Burma. [22222]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Burma. Serious abuses of human rights continue, particularly in areas where there is still armed conflict. The humanitarian situation is grave. Only a genuinely inclusive process of national reconciliation can solve Burma's many problems.

The EU Troika, including the United Kingdom, expressed concern over the situation in Burma to the Burmese Foreign Minister, Nyan Win, in Kyoto on 6 May as did our ambassador and other EU ambassadors in Rangoon, on 22 August. Most recently, our ambassador in Rangoon raised our concerns with the Burmese Home Minister, Maung Oo, on 26 October. We continue to believe that it is essential for the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to enter into a genuine constructive dialogue with all legitimate representative bodies including Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, and the ethnic groups to promote a peaceful, lasting and democratic outcome.

We fully support the efforts of UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, whom we urge the SPDC to allow to return to Burma.

We remain willing to support a genuine process of national reconciliation, leading to the restoration of democracy and full respect for human rights in Burma and we will respond positively to tangible progress.

Colombia

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received from the Colombian Government on the case of the three IRA members who were convicted of terrorist offences in Colombia and who have fled the country. [23352]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have received no recent representations from the Colombian Government over this issue.

EU China Human Rights Dialogue

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress made at the EU China Human Rights Dialogue meeting held in Beijing on 24 October. [23075]

Ian Pearson: The priority topic of this dialogue was freedom of religion but the EU delegation raised a number of human rights concerns on aspects of rule of law and co-operation with UN human rights mechanisms. There was a field trip to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region which finished on 27 October.

Iraq

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the European Commission regarding Iraq. [22958]

Dr. Howells: The most recent discussion my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had with the Commission on Iraq was with Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner during the signing of the EU-Iraq Joint Political Declaration on 21 September in New York.

Government officials have also kept in regular contact with their Commission counterparts both in Brussels and on the ground in Iraq, most recently by the 24–26 October EU Political Directors Troika visit to take forward the EU-Iraq political dialogue.

Madrasses

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government provide funding for *(a)* the establishment of and *(b)* attendance at Madrasses in Moslem countries. [22271]

Dr. Howells: The Government do not provide funding for these purposes.

Mujahadin-e-Khalk

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to *(a)* the US and *(b)* the EU to remove the Mujahadin-e-Khalk (PMOI) from its list of debarred organisations. [22552]

Dr. Howells: We have no such plans. The Mojahedin-e Khalq (MeK) is proscribed in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2000. It has a long history of involvement in terrorism in Iran and elsewhere and is, by its own admission, responsible for violent attacks that have resulted in many deaths. The MeK is listed in the US as a foreign terrorist organisation, and it is on the EU's asset freeze list. We welcome this.

Nepal

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has been informed of potential *(a)* curtailment and *(b)* disruption of BBC World Service broadcasts in Nepali language being planned by the government of Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [21904]

Dr. Howells: The BBC World Service leases a frequency on the FM waveband from the state-owned Radio Nepal. This is for the English language BBC World Service but also includes a daily Nepali language news programme. A number of independent Nepali FM radio stations also re-transmit this news programme as part of their output.

Following King Gyanendra's takeover of power on 1 February, a State of Emergency was declared under which a number of restrictive measures were introduced. As part of these measures, the Nepali authorities jammed the BBC Nepali language news programme and part of the English language news bulletins. They also ordered independent Nepali FM radio stations to stop broadcasting all news programmes. Some of these stations resumed news broadcasting after obtaining a favourable Supreme Court order on 10 August but the Nepali Government reinforced the news ban with a new Media Ordinance promulgated on 9 October.

The Nepali authorities have not interfered with the BBC Nepali service which is broadcast on the shortwave band.

The UK is deeply concerned about the restrictions imposed by the Government of Nepal on the media. We believe that these restrictions, including the new Media Ordinance, infringe unacceptably upon freedom of expression.

The British Government and the BBC have formally requested the Government of Nepal to allow the BBC to broadcast unhindered. The British Ambassador in Kathmandu has also raised our concerns about media censorship directly with the King, in the context of our wider concerns about the erosion of democratic processes, institutions and civil liberties.

Non-proliferation

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures the United Kingdom plans to propose within the

context of the European Union against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction during the UK's presidency of the European Union. [21228]

Mr. Straw: In line with our over-arching presidency objectives, our focus has been on running an efficient presidency and increasing the effectiveness of EU efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation. The EU has played a prominent and constructive role in the UN General Assembly First Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group Consultative Committee and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Plenary meeting among others. We have initiated and led an internal debate to prepare EU ideas to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) at its review conference in 2006.

The EU has provided further financial support to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (POCW) and hopes to agree similar support by the end of our presidency to assist the effective implementation of the BTWC. We are drawing up plans with the Council Secretariat and Commission for work with a wide range of third countries to enhance export control measures. We are also working with the Council Secretariat, Commission and member states to revise the list of priorities for implementation of the EU WMD strategy ahead of the European Council in December.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is his Department's policy that there should be a specific budget line on non-proliferation and disarmament in the next European Union Financial Perspective for 2007 to 2013. [21229]

Mr. Straw: There already is a budget line for non-proliferation activities within the group of budget lines for common foreign and security policy (CFSP) activities. Our view is that this budget line should remain, within the CFSP envelope, in the next financial perspective. We do not think, however, that it would be appropriate to have one budget line or instrument covering both Commission and CFSP activity in this area as each requires a separate legal base. Activity such as nuclear safety is carried out under the euratom treaty. CFSP activities, such as non-proliferation and small arms and light weapons projects with third countries, are carried out on the basis of title V, treaty on European Union i.e. on the decision of all member states in the CFSP framework.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has to ensure that the European Commission continues to meet all its obligations under the Global Partnership in relation to nuclear non-proliferation in the next European Union Financial Perspective 2007 to 2013. [21230]

Mr. Straw: We are working with partners on plans for the EU's next Financial Perspective (2007–13). These include increasing the effectiveness of the global security agenda and the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) budget. The proposed nuclear safety instrument would provide a specific basis for funding activities that fall under the Commission's competence on the basis of the euratom treaty. The CFSP budget will remain as the basis for member states' activity through CFSP. We are arguing for an increase in the latter, within an overall budget of no more than 1 per cent. of EU gross national income.

We have also co-sponsored with the Commission an EU pilot project on weapons of mass destruction. The recommendations will identify priorities for community funding of non-proliferation projects. This will inform EU thinking on how best to spend the increase in funding needed to meet the European Commission's 2002 pledge to contribute €1 billion over 10 years to the global partnership.

Prince of Wales (United States Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of the estimated costs of the Prince of Wales's next visit to the United States is expected to be met from public funds, other than those provided for in the civil list; and if he will make a statement. [22779]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Travel costs, including reconnaissance costs, are expected to amount to around £330,000 and will be met from the Royal Households Official Travel Grant-in-Aid. Approximately 40 per cent. of the other costs are expected to be met by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from public funds, with the balance of 60 per cent. being met by charitable organisations related to The Prince of Wales, or by The Prince of Wales personally.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Minister plans to attend the launch of the Pilot Project Study on Weapons of Mass Destruction produced by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute to be held in the European Parliament on 8 December. [21231]

Mr. Straw: We are considering who should attend for the Government.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Residential Housing

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how many residential housing units, excluding those used by the clergy for homes, the Commissioners own, broken down by *(a)* area and *(b)* estate; how many were owned in 2002; and how many are not let on fair rent tenancies. [22213]

Sir Stuart Bell: At the end of 2004 the Commissioners owned 4,244 residential units comprising 1,809 units on the Hyde Park Estate, 845 residential units within the rural portfolio, 1,590 units in the Octavia Hill Estates, and other residential holdings.

The rural properties are spread throughout England and the Commissioners' 46 estates. The Hyde Park Estate units are all in central London. The current number of units on the Octavia Hill Estates, all located in London is: Vauxhall (230), Walworth (618),

Waterloo (159), Winchester Park (93), Pimlico (32). The other residential holdings, located predominantly in London and the South East, account for a further 130 units. The Commissioners also own a small number of residential units in their Bishoprics portfolio, which are ancillary to the See Houses and are directly let.

In 2002 the Commissioners owned 4,551 residential units.

At the end of 2004, 82.4 per cent. of the Commissioners' residential units were not fair-rented tenancies.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how many residential housing units the Commissioners have sold in the last five years; and how many units are being offered for sale, broken down by location. [22214]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners completed the sale of 460 units on the Octavia Hill estates earlier this year: 135 in Waterloo (north of The Cut), 236 in Maida Vale and 89 in Stoke Newington. 238 units have been sold on the Hyde Park estate over the last five years.

A further 72 residential properties have been sold from the rural portfolio since the beginning of 2001, and 16 are currently either being marketed or are under-offer.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Automated Signing Machines

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* he or *(b)* any other Minister in his Department uses (i) an automated signing machine and (ii) a stamp for ministerial correspondence purposes. [19860]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Guidance on handling ministerial correspondence is set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments' copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

British Standard 6399/2

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the regulatory impact assessment of the proposed British Standard 6399/2 about wind loads. [22876]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* British standards are published by the British Standards Institute which is independent of Government and, therefore, no regulatory impact assessment has been carried out.

Census

Grant Shapps: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what census data calculation of the 2006–07 local government formula spending shares will be based. [23512]

Mr. Woolas: Options to use 2001 census data were part of the wider formula grant distribution consultation that concluded on the 10 October 2005. Ministers are now considering the options to change the method of formula grant distribution for 2006–07 taking into account representations received.

Decisions will be announced when the provisional settlement is laid in Parliament later this year.

Community Land Trusts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the role of community land trusts and their relationship to rural settlements. [22028]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are always interested in new initiatives, if they can help meet our objectives of delivering affordable housing and engaging communities. This applies equally in urban and rural areas. English Partnerships is assessing the case for a pilot community land trust on public sector land at Cashes Green in his constituency.

Rural settlements face a range of complex issues, including the provision of sufficient affordable housing. The Affordable Rural Housing Commission is currently gathering evidence on many of the housing issues affecting rural settlements. It aims to take a broad look at the issues with an open mind and provide practical solutions, taking account of existing good practice.

Council Tax

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations from pensioner groups he has received in the last 12 months on council tax; and if he will make a statement. [21492]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has identified eight written representations from groups exclusively representing pensioners on council tax in the last 12 months. Issues raised include the effect of council tax bills on pensioners on low and fixed incomes; council tax benefit; and reform of the local government finance system.

We recognise the concerns expressed in these representations and many other letters from individual pensioners. Sir Michael Lyons is considering such issues in his inquiry into the funding of local government within the context of its wider functions and future role. We look forward to receiving Sir Michael Lyons' recommendations at the end of 2006.

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the single person's reduction in council tax will apply to the Olympics precept. [22338]

Mr. Woolas: Where a taxpayer qualifies for a single person's discount this is applied to the whole council tax bill.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether a Class G exemption applies when a planning restriction prevents occupancy; and if he will make a statement; [22402]

(2) what the current eligibility criteria are for a Class G council tax exemption. [22403]

Mr. Woolas: The Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 (SI 1992/558) provides, under Class G, that an unoccupied dwelling the occupation of which is prohibited by law, or which is kept unoccupied by

reason of action taken under powers conferred by or under any Act of Parliament, with a view to prohibiting its occupation or to acquiring it, is an exempt dwelling for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 on a particular day if on that day it falls within that class.

Whether a Class G exemption applies where a planning restriction prevents occupancy has been open to different interpretations. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will therefore consult shortly on a proposed amendment to the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order which would clarify that dwellings are exempt in these circumstances.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether personal representatives of deceased council tax payers can be penalised for *(a)* non-completion and *(b)* non-payment of council tax returns by the deceased in the financial year before the death. [22438]

Mr. Woolas: Regulation 58 of the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations (SI 1992/613) provides that in respect of any outstanding balances of council tax or relevant costs due at the date of death, or of any sum which would, but for the person's death, become payable after the date of death, the executor or administrator of the deceased person's estate will be liable to pay the sum in question to the billing authority, and may deduct out of the assets and effects of the deceased's estate any payments made or to be made.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gatehead, East and Washington, West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22282]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Gateshead East, and Washington, West constituency through a number of programmes.

For example, over the period 2001–06 Gateshead has received £19.7 million of neighbourhood renewal fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the local strategic partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

Gateshead will get the safer and stronger communities fund cleaner safer greener element worth £2.1 million over the next two years (2006–07 and 2007–08). It will also get the neighbourhood element worth £1.6 million.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Gateshead local authority has received an average annual increase in formula grant since 1997 of 4.2 per cent.

The neighbourhood statistics service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at

http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

Design for Manufacture Competition

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who will determine the final sale prices for the homes constructed in the Design for Manufacture competition. [17378]

Yvette Cooper: The Design for Manufacture competition is being run by English Partnerships on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. English Partnerships is currently evaluating bids from developers for Stage 3 of the Competition. Final development proposals and planning applications for each site will determine the mix of housing types, sale prices and community facilities.

Final sales prices will be determined by the developers on a site-by-site basis to accord with local supply and demand. English Partnerships and the ODPM will not determine the sales prices. It is anticipated that there will be a mix of tenure on each site, with some homes being available under shared equity for first time buyers.

Directly-elected Mayors

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government has to promote the adoption of directly-elected mayors; and if he will make a statement. [19875]

Mr. Woolas: Currently, whether a mayoral form of governance is adopted by a local authority is a matter of local choice. The vibrant local leadership discussion document covered the issue of directly-elected mayors and consideration will be given to any responses to that document in due course.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when he plans to announce the findings of the review into the disabled facilities grant; and if he will make a statement; [23136]

(2) how many representations he has had supporting the abolition of the means-tested element of the disabled facilities grant; and if he will make a statement. [23137]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 27 October 2005 about the review of disabled facilities grant, *Official Report*, column 14WS.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21304]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Progress on both headcount reductions in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Central), Government Offices for the Regions and ODPM's executive agencies and on cost savings was reported in the ODPM Departmental Annual Report, 2004. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Reports, which will include figures for headcount reduction in NDPBs as well as the core Department and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21310]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's efficiency programme.

Housing

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Brent East (Sarah Teather) of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 613W, on housing as a result of section 106 agreements, if he will break down the figures for each year by local authority. [19688]

Yvette Cooper: A table showing the number of dwellings built as a result of section 106 agreements in each local authority in England, in each year from 2000–01 to 2003–04, has been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of houses to be built in *(a)* Braintree constituency and *(b)* Essex in the next 10 years. [21808]

Yvette Cooper: The review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England is currently considering how many homes will be built in Braintree district and Essex county over the next 10 years.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1140W, on housing, if he will update Table A to include the number of households on the housing register per thousand people in each local authority. [22423]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Table A is as follows with the appended column showing the percentage of total households that are on the local authority's housing register.

Local authorities in England report the number of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a housing association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Table A: Local authorities who reported the 25 highest figures for number of households on their housing register at 1 April 2005

	Local authority	*Region*	*Number of households in the housing register*	*As a percentage of total households*
1	Sheffield	Yorkshire and the Humber	72,604	33
2	Bradford	Yorkshire and the Humber	32,046	17
3	Leeds	Yorkshire and the Humber	30,699	10
4	Newham	London	25,317	26
5	Tower Hamlets	London	21,183	24
6	Haringey	London	19,930	20
7	Sandwell	West Midlands	19,655	17
8	Lewisham	London	18,279	16
9	Manchester	North West	17,772	10
10	Birmingham	West Midlands	17,493	4
11	Brent	London	17,351	15
12	Camden	London	16,532	17
13	Sunderland	North East	16,222	14
14	Bolton	North West	16,096	15
15	Wirral	North West	15,524	11
16	Baling	London	14,324	17
17	Rotherham	Yorkshire and the Humber	13,903	13
18	Barnet	London	13,627	10
19	Newcastle upon Tyne	North East	13,099	11
20	East Riding of Yorkshire	Yorkshire and the Humber	12,163	9
21	Walsall	West Midlands	12,024	12
22	Doncaster	Yorkshire and the Humber	11,937	10
23	Bristol	South West	11,809	7
24	Sefton	North West	11,637	10
25	Leicester	East Midlands	11,482	10

Ms Keeble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of overcrowding in housing. [22302]

Yvette Cooper: According to the latest results from the Survey of English Housing (SEH), some 560,000 households in England (2.7 per cent.) did not meet the

bedroom standard in 2004–05. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that 14,000 households do not meet the statutory overcrowding standards in the Housing Act 1985.

Investment (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the level of investment into the Kettering constituency via English Partnership over the next 10 years. [23192]

Yvette Cooper: Kettering is a key growth town within the Milton Keynes-South Midlands growth area, and as such it forms an important part of the Government's sustainable communities agenda.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is discussing English Partnerships' future programme and priorities as part of their current corporate planning round for the years 2005–06 to 2008–09.

Funding for ODPM programmes for 2008–09 to 2010–11 will be dependent on the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

Leasehold Reform Act

Robert Key: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued on whether the provisions of the Leasehold Reform Act 2002 relating to leasehold enfranchisement apply to *(a)* rented flats and *(b)* rented houses owned by English cathedrals which are subject to charity legislation. [23601]

Yvette Cooper: The leasehold enfranchisement provisions in the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, which amended existing enfranchisement provisions, are only available to long leaseholders (those with leases which were granted for a term exceeding 21 years), and do not apply to renting tenants.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced a booklet entitled "Residential Long Leaseholders—A guide to your rights and responsibilities". This booklet sets out who is eligible to enfranchise and where exceptions apply, and is available from ODPM Publications, PO Box No. 236, Wetherby, LS23 7NB Telephone 0870 1226 236.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff are employed by the local government ombudsman. [23576]

Mr. Woolas: The local government ombudsman currently employs 202 staff.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget is for the local government ombudsman in 2005–06. [23605]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has agreed to make available to the local government ombudsman funding of £11,522,400 in 2005–06.

Lyons Inquiry

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 813W, on the Lyons Inquiry, what estimated date his Department has been informed of by Sir Michael Lyons for the date of publication of the interim report; and what date his Department's press office forward-planning grid lists. [22276]

Mr. Woolas: Sir Michael Lyons intends to publish information later this autumn. However, as yet, he has set no specific date.

Mobile Telecommunication Masts

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley since 1997. [21892]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. The hon. Member may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

New Build

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new houses and dwellings were built in *(a)* Sheffield, *(b)* Rotherham, *(c)* Doncaster and *(d)* Barnsley in each year since 2000. [21925]

Yvette Cooper: The annual number of new build completions reported for *(a)* Sheffield, *(b)* Rotherham, *(c)* Doncaster and *(d)* Barnsley in each year since 2000 are as tabled:

Number of new build completions

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Sheffield	654	717	733	736	1,349
Rotherham	937	1,006	1,229	810	598
Doncaster	703	592	847	546	731
Barnsley	754	783	649	758	815

Source:
Returns (P2/NHBC) to ODPM on building control completions.

Planning

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the planning system on disabled people seeking to install equipment to assist their mobility in and around their homes; and if he will make a statement. [23175]

Yvette Cooper: Work to the interior of existing homes, garages and other curtilage buildings is not governed by the planning system, unless a building has been listed for its special architectural or historic interest. Many external works are authorised under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. For the local planning authority the test is whether installation of equipment would amount to 'development' and, if so, whether it would breach any of the limits set by the Permitted Development Order to help protect the amenity of the neighbourhood. Even

where a planning application is necessary, the fee is waived if the works are designed to improve access for a disabled person to his or her home.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to reinforce the integrity of village envelopes within the planning system in the new growth areas. [23191]

Yvette Cooper: A village envelope is boundary defined on a map beyond which the local planning authority proposes that a village should not be allowed to extend.

The Government have no national planning policy on village envelopes and is a matter for local planning authorities.

The growth areas are targeted on urban areas so as to maximise use of brown field land, to help urban renaissance and to contribute to regeneration.

Police and Fire Authorities

Graham Stringer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the gearing ratio for each *(a)* police and *(b)* fire authority budget in England is. [22881]

Jim Fitzpatrick: An authority's gearing ratio is a measure of the impact that an increase in its budget has on its council tax. In the following table are gearing ratios derived from data on Revenue Accounts budget returns supplied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for 2005–06. The ratios have been calculated as revenue expenditure divided by the council tax requirement for the relevant authorities:

	Gearing ratio
Shire police authorities	
Avon and Somerset	3.6
Bedfordshire	4.3
Cambridgeshire	3.5
Cheshire	4.4
Cleveland	5.1
Cumbria	3.6
Derbyshire	3.9
Devon and Cornwall	3.7
Dorset	2.8
Durham	6.6
Essex	3.9
Gloucestershire	3.0
Hampshire	5.3
Hertfordshire	3.4
Humberside	4.4
Kent	4.1
Lancashire	5.2
Leicestershire	4.1
Lincolnshire	3.7
Norfolk	3.4
North Yorkshire	2.6
Northamptonshire	3.2
Nottinghamshire	4.6
Staffordshire	3.5
Suffolk	3.5
Surrey	2.4
Sussex	3.8
Thames Valley	4.0
Warwickshire	3.2
West Mercia	3.0
Wiltshire	3.3
Metropolitan police authorities	
Greater Manchester	9.1
Merseyside	6.8
South Yorkshire	6.0
Northumbria	9.5
West Midlands	8.0
West Yorkshire	6.0
Combined fire authorities	
Avon Fire Authority	2.5
Bedfordshire and Luton Fire Authority	1.8
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	2.0
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority	1.8
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority	2.0
Cheshire Fire Authority	1.8
Cleveland Fire Authority	3.7
Derbyshire Fire Authority	2.1
Devon Fire Authority	2.0
Dorset Fire Authority	1.9
County Durham and Darlington Fire Authority	2.1
East Sussex Fire Authority	1.7
Essex Fire Authority	1.9
Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority	2.5
Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	1.7
Humberside Fire Authority	2.4
Kent and Medway Fire Authority	1.8
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	2.5
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority	2.4
North Yorkshire Fire Authority	2.0
Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority	2.2
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority	1.7
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	1.9
Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority	1.8
Metropolitan fire authorities	
Greater Manchester	3.4
Merseyside	3.4
South Yorkshire	3.1
Tyne and Wear	2.9
West Midlands	4.2
West Yorkshire	3.2

Multi-purpose authorities that are responsible for services other than fire and police have not been included in the table. These authorities include those county councils that are responsible for fire services, the Greater London Authority, which has responsibility for police and fire, and the City of London, which has responsibility for its own police.

Policies (Financial Support)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what costings of *(a)* Conservative, *(b)* Labour and *(c)* Liberal Democrat policies his Department has (i) undertaken, (ii) co-ordinated and (iii) advised upon in the last 12 months; and in respect of which policies. [19880]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In accordance with Cabinet Office guidance, costings were carried out at the request of Ministers of some of the policies set out in the Conservative documents "Home Truths: the Right to Own" and "Better Public Services, Better Value".

No costings were undertaken of Liberal Democrat policies.

Labour policies were costed as part of the work undertaken on behalf of Ministers to implement those policies.

Regional Chambers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the *(a)* local authority and *(b)* stakeholder members of the regional chambers are subject to potential investigation by the Standards Board for England in their capacity as members of the regional chamber. [22446]

Mr. Woolas: Local authority members who serve on regional assemblies are subject to the code of conduct of their local authority. Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a member, it is a matter for the Standards Board for England to decide whether the allegation should be investigated. Other stakeholder members of regional assemblies are outside the remit of the Standards Board but must adhere to the individual code of conduct each assembly has in place.

Regional Fire Control

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish *(a)* a cost-benefit analysis and *(b)* the regulatory impact assessment for the Government's plans to establish regional fire control rooms in England outside London. [19921]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already published a cost-benefit analysis of the FiReControl project. This is available on the FiReControl website (www.firecontrol.odpm.gov.uk) as the "Economic Case" section of the project's Outline Business Case. After the technology/infrastructure services procurement is completed, it will be possible to produce a Full Business Case containing actual costs for the infrastructure.

Prior to April 2004, regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) were not required for any proposal that had an impact solely on public services. When the policy decision to proceed with the FiReControl project was announced to the house on 4 March 2004, it was determined that the proposals to establish regional fire control rooms in England met this criterion. For this reason, no RIA was developed.

Social/Affordable Housing

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from the London borough of Islington on its requirements for social housing authorities' new developments; and if he will make a statement. [22021]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not received any representations from the London borough of Islington on this matter.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to increase the number of units of *(a)* social and *(b)* affordable housing in Tamworth constituency. [22156]

Yvette Cooper: The policy for ensuring provision of affordable homes is being considered as part of the Tamworth Local Plan review process. The Inspector's report on these revisions is due to be published soon and it would not be proper to pre-empt these considerations.

Earlier this year the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister introduced changes to the planning system aimed at removing barriers to delivering affordable homes and to free up unused employment land where it is needed for housing. Following publication of the Inspector's report, Tamworth borough council will begin work on a Housing Development Plan Document which will form part of the overall Local Development Framework for the borough. Work on the document which will set out future housing needs, including for affordable and social housing, is due to get under way early in 2006.

My hon. Friend will be aware that the Government have a long-term strategy to increase the supply of affordable housing. Over the next five years our new homebuy schemes will extend the opportunity for home ownership for potentially 100,000 households by 2010. These schemes will introduce simpler, fairer and more affordable products to help people to get a foot on the housing ladder.

We are also investing heavily in new affordable homes for rent with investment for 2007–08 earmarked at around £2 billion which is double what it was in 1997. At the same time we are increasing investment in social homes which, in the three years to 2008, will provide 75,000 new homes which is a 50 per cent. increase per year over original targets. The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy is providing the first step towards addressing affordable housing issues in the region. The Strategy has informed the regional housing board's allocation of funding for the period 2004 to 2008 including £368 million for investment in social housing which should deliver nearly 10,000 new homes across the region.

Supporting People Programme

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of Government expenditure has been on the Supporting People programme in each year of its operation; and what allocations have been made for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [22445]

Mr. Woolas: Since 2003, Government expenditure on the Supporting People Programme has been £5.5 billion.

	Expenditure (£ billion)
2003–04	1.88
2004–05	1.87
2005–06	1.76

The allocation of funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 has yet to be made and will be announced in December 2005 alongside the Local Government Settlement.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the predicted grant underspend for 2005–06 in the supporting people programme reported by the Audit Commission. [22666]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister welcomes the audit commission's report and is looking at all of the findings. These will be taken forward through our work on developing the supporting people strategy. We intend to publish a consultation paper on this shortly.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Africa

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding he has allocated to tackling *(a)* ascariasis, *(b)* elephantiasis and *(c)* river blindness in Africa in 2005–06. [21541]

Hilary Benn: DFID prioritises the provision of basic health services in Africa and is helping to build comprehensive and sustainable health services in many countries. This helps poor countries tackle diseases such as ascariasis, elephantiasis and river blindness, in addition to many others.

These diseases are often linked to dirty water or poor sanitation. DFID is committed to helping African countries provide clean water and sanitation for their people and will double aid expenditure on water and sanitation in Africa over the next three years.

In addition, DFID targets funds at parasitic diseases through a number of Global Health Partnerships, multilateral agencies and researchers. For example, DFID supports the African Programme for Onchocerciasis (river blindness) Control. We have supported onchocerciasis control continuously since 1974, contributing around £4.65 million to date. DFID is currently undertaking a progress review which will help determine our contribution in 2005–06 and future years.

DFID have also pledged £2.5 million over five years (2005–10) to the Lymphatic Filariasis (elephantiasis) Support Centre (LFSC) at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), to support the work of the Global Alliance for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF) of which £500,000 will be disbursed during 2005–06.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what work his Department is doing on development and disaster risk reduction. [23020]

Mr. Thomas: At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Japan in January this year member states including the United Kingdom renewed their commitment to reducing disaster risk. At Gleneagles in July, the G8 also agreed to increase investment in disaster risk reduction. The challenge is to transform these commitments into action in developing countries where it is needed most.

In 2004 the Secretary of State for International Development committed the Department to increase expenditure on disaster risk reduction. The UK is already the largest contributor of unearmarked funds to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). Earlier this year, we committed £3.5 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for their disaster risk reduction programmes in Africa and Asia. We have also allocated 10 per cent. of our tsunami response funds to support disaster risk reduction measures in the countries affected. In October 2005 we committed £12.5 million over five years to support the community level disaster risk reduction work of five international non-governmental organisations.

We are developing a new policy paper on disaster risk reduction to enable DFID to tackle disaster risk more effectively, and to advise our country offices on ways of incorporating disaster risk reduction into development. We have also called on the United Nations and the World Bank to do more on disaster risk reduction. This challenge is being taken up through the reform of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and increasing recognition of disaster risk reduction in Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Malawi

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the food shortage in Malawi. [21542]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Malawi and donors were able to respond quickly to the food shortages in Malawi because Malawi had a good early warning system, and an effective system of assessing needs and allocating food aid.

To date, 1.8 million people have received food aid. This will rise to 2.8 million people by the end of December as needs increase. By the end of the hungry season, the plan is to feed 4.2 million people. The distribution of the food aid through the Government and the World Food Programme (WFP) is carefully targeted and monitored to ensure that it properly meets those in greatest need.

The UK Government have contributed £15.2 million to address Malawi's food shortages this year. These funds paid for 70,000 tons of food, the financing of a logistics unit that is distributing food on behalf of the Government, options for the Government of Malawi on a further 60,000 tons of maize, the purchase of seeds for next year's harvest and support for UNICEF's nutritional rehabilitation units, which treat severely malnourished children.

DFID continues to monitor the situation closely and, with the Government of Malawi, have called for an updated assessment of needs, which will be published later this week. We stand ready to support the Government of Malawi if more needs to be done.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* money and *(b)* food aid the Government have given to aid organisations for operations in Malawi since it received news of the drought. [22898]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government have contributed £15.2 million to address Malawi's food shortages this year. Of this amount, £6.7 million has been used to purchase 45,000 tons of maize, which will be distributed with the help of Non Governmental Organisations on the ground in targeting poor people whose harvests have failed and who do not have money to buy food. £4.87 million of additional budget support has been used by the Government of Malawi to buy options on 60,000 tons of maize in case the food situation worsens plus the purchase of seeds for next year's harvest. A further £3 million will be used after the next harvest to replenish 22,400 tons of maize drawn from the Strategic Grain Reserve to provide food aid.

DFID is also providing £500,000 to build the Government's capacity, including financing a logistics unit to distribute food on behalf of government. A further £130,000 has been given to UNICEF to support their treatment programme for severely malnourished children. We are monitoring the situation closely and stand ready to do more if required.

Obstetric Fistula

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding the Department has allocated to tackling obstetric fistula in Africa in 2005–06. [22558]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides most of its health-related assistance to Africa in support of building comprehensive health services, often through non-earmarked Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support (PRBS) or ear-marked health sector support. Whilst a proportion of this will be used to tackle obstetric fistula, it is not possible to provide an exact figure for spend in this area.

The cornerstone of preventing obstetric fistulae is prompt access to good quality health care when needed. DFID is committed to helping countries expand access to health care, including family planning, antenatal and obstetric services.

DFID also targets some funding through NGOs to tackle obstetric fistula. For example, DFID has provided a grant of £588,000 to the Engendered Health and Women's Dignity Project to combat obstetric fistula in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda.

To complement our country level support, DFID also channels funds though the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). For the period of 2005–06, DFID has provided £20 million core funding and £10 million specifically for reproductive health (for preventable and treatable conditions such as obstetric fistula).

Poorly Performing Projects

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development for how many projects the Department has stopped funding for reasons of ineffectiveness in each of the last eight years. [21947]

Hilary Benn: The Performance Reporting Information System for Management (PRISM) monitoring process alerts programme managers to underperforming projects and requires them to agree any changes needed to implementation arrangements, resources or targets to achieve the intended development outcomes.

For the years in question, DFID does not keep a record of the number of projects which were terminated because they were ineffective or are no longer relevant.

Poverty Reduction

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what statistical measures of the effectiveness of aid in reducing poverty his Department uses when deciding which *(a)* countries and *(b)* projects receive funding. [21944]

Hilary Benn: DFID draws on the fullest possible range of statistical information available on poverty and on the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals when deciding funding for countries and for projects. All new DFID commitments are subject to rigorous analysis and appraisal in line with agreed guidelines and international best practice.

UN Millennium Review

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the outcome of the UN Millennium Review Summit. [23615]

Hilary Benn: I am pleased that, on development, the outcome of the UN Millennium Review Summit consolidated all that was achieved at the G8 Summit at Gleneagles.

In particular, the summit endorsed the need for faster progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), acknowledging the special needs of Africa. It also endorsed the G8 approach on HIV/AIDS and climate change, including, importantly, on stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations.

The commitments of the G8 and EU, to increase aid, provide deeper debt relief and explorie innovative financing mechanisms were all welcomed.

Important commitments were also made in other areas too. For DFID, our immediate priorities are to support the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission by the end of the year and to develop satisfactory arrangements for the Peacebuilding Fund; to be closely involved in the process by which the Secretary General develops his ideas for longer-term reform of the UN development architecture; and to continue to work with the UN on reform of the humanitarian assistance system.

The Millennium Review Summit ensured that the momentum generated at Gleneagles was maintained, and the commitments made there given global endorsement by the 191 UN member states. There is still much to be done, but the agreements reached this year represent a significant step towards reducing poverty in developing countries.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Arson

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost to the Government of arson in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Essex in the last year for which figures are available. [21036]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have been asked to reply.

The most recent available information is for 2003 and is tabled as follows. For that year the total cost of arson to the economy in England and Wales was an estimated £2,849 million, of which 28 per cent. (£806 million) was incurred by the public sector. The biggest single element of public sector expenditure was in funding the Fire and Rescue Service to respond to arson fires, which cost an estimated £642 million in 2003.

Within the Essex Fire and Rescue Authority area, the total cost of arson fires in 2003 was estimated £56 million, of which £12 million was incurred by the public sector (including £6 million fire service response costs; and £4 million resulting from fire damage in public sector buildings).

Costs of arson, 2003

£ million

	England and Wales	*Essex*
Total cost of deliberate fires to the economy	2,849	56
Total of deliberate fires to the public sector	806	12
Costs in anticipation:		
Fire safety	16	0.3
Consequential costs:		
Criminal justice system costs	87	2
Property fire damage to public sector buildings (eg schools, hospitals, government property)	61	4
Response costs:		
Cost of fire service attendance	642	6

ASBOs

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders in the Wakefield district area were *(a)* found to be in breach of their anti-social behaviour orders and *(b)* given custodial sentences. [20741]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Court Proceedings Database held by my Department holds breach proceedings only where there has been a conviction.

Data on convictions for breach of an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003. During this period my Department received notification of 1,892 persons receiving ASBOs in England and Wales. Of these, 793 were convicted of breaching their ASBO on one or more occasions. 437 received a custodial sentence for at least one of the breaches. The proportion of persons (356) who did not receive a custodial sentence is 45 per cent.

Data on convictions for breach of an ASBO are available at Criminal Justice System level only. As such data for Wakefield metropolitan district council are not available.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme who have unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 were categorised under each of the penalty point categories listed in section 13e of the scheme in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [21211]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advise that penalty point data are not held centrally.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applicants to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme who do not have unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 applying for compensation for a murder have *(a)* been refused or *(b)* received reduced compensation because the victim had unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in each of the last five years for which records are available; [21213]

(2) how many applicants to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme who have unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 applying for compensation for a murder have *(a)* been refused and *(b)* received reduced compensation although the victim did not have any unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in each of the last five years for which records are available. [21214]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advise that the data they record centrally do not distinguish between refusals and reductions for the victim's convictions and the applicant's convictions, but merely records refusals and reductions on account of convictions. The available data are given in the table.

CICS finalised fatal awards reduced/refused for victim's/applicant's previous convictions

	Refused	*Reduced*
2000–01	132	60
2001–02	209	88
2002–03	246	105
2003–04	204	122
2004–05	236	124

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what percentage of applications for compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001 have been successful in each year of its operation; [21258]

(2) what percentage of applicants, under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001, have received compensation for each year of its operation. [21263]

Fiona Mactaggart: The success rate (percentage of applications attracting a monetary award) in the four years 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 was 57 per cent., 55 per cent., 55 per cent. and 54 per cent. respectively.

Domestic Violence

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding has been made available to support the victims of domestic violence and their children in *(a)* South Bedfordshire district and *(b)* Dacorum borough in each of the last three years. [20289]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The table shows the allocations of funding which has been made available from the Home Office Building Safer Communities Fund and Domestic Violence Funding, to provide for a range of services for victims of domestic violence and their children in *(a)* South Bedfordshire district and *(b)* Dacorum borough in each of the last three years.

The support services provided for include; Mother and Child Drug Abuse outreach work; District and Countywide Domestic Violence Co-ordinators; Refuge worker and Counselling services for Women's Aid Federation of England; Sunflower Centre-Multi-agency support centre victims of sexual assault; and Training and Support for victims of Domestic Violence.

	South Bedfordshire	Dacorum
2003–04	22,000	32,380
2004–05	61,631	62,590
2005–06	60,000	39,000

Double-seated Embrace Restraint

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times the double-seated embrace restraint was used in each secure training centre in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [22304]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Drug Smuggling

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests of people carrying illegal drugs from Jamaica there have been since 2001. [19384]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

There have been a total of 2,351 arrests by HM Revenue and Customs (formerly HM Customs and Excise) of people carrying illegal drugs from Jamaica since 2001.

Feltham Young Offenders Institution

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of staffing levels at Feltham Young Offenders Institution. [21785]

Fiona Mactaggart: Administrative staffing levels at Feltham are stable with relatively slow turnover. Within officer grades turnover is greater, particularly within the first 12 months that staff are in post. Historically, Feltham has experienced recruitment difficulties but this situation has improved, with more staff being recruited from the local area and a proactive approach ensuring that high numbers of vacancies do not occur. Sickness levels have also drastically improved over the last three years

Kamel Bourgass

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 27 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1243W, on Kamel Bourgass, if he will estimate the approximate date when the information was passed from the police to the Home Office and Ministers; and when Porton Down passed this information to Ministers. [11813]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Following the police raid on 5 January 2003, a pestle and mortar was found in the flat on 6 January 2003 and sent for analysis. An e-mail sent at 06:02 am on 7 January 2003 from the Terrorism and Protection Unit (TPU) to the Home Secretary's Office confirmed a notification received earlier that morning (no time, medium, source or recipient recorded) that the powder found inside the mortar was ricin—enough for one lethal dose.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2005, we have a legal obligation to search for any relevant information before making the decision whether to disclose or apply an exemption.

After a very thorough search I can confirm that the Home Office does not hold any other information relevant to the question.

Mental Health (Prisons)

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been transferred under sections 47 and 48 of the Mental Health Act 1983 from the dangerous and severe personality disorder units at HMP Whitemoor and Frankland. [21556]

Fiona Mactaggart: A total of 26 prisoners that have been in contact with the prison based DSPD units at HMP Whitemoor and Frankland have been transferred under section 47 of the Mental Health Act 1983, to high secure hospitals. No prisoners were transferred under section 48.

Prisoner Re-offending

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prisoners released with electronic tags have re-offended. [19471]

Fiona Mactaggart: As of 31 August 2005, over 116,000 prisoners have been released on the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme since it was introduced in January 1999. The number of offenders who have been convicted, cautioned or are awaiting prosecution for a further offence, committed while subject to HDC, as notified to the Home Office by 31 August 2005, is 3,583, which is approximately 3 per cent. of the total curfews placed on the scheme.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prisoners sentenced to between one and four years and then subject to early release were later recalled to prison for re-offending over the last five years. [19050]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 17 October 2005]*: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Number of prisoners sentenced to between one and four years and subject to early release[1] who were later recalled for re-offending

	Total released	Total recalled for re-offending	Total recalled for re-offending as a percentage of those released (percentage)
2000	7,578	54	1
2001	6,897	65	1
2002	9,762	84	1
2003	10,653	234	2
2004	9,109	286	3

[1] Subject to early release means those released early to serve part of their sentence under home detention curfew.

Prisons

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which routes of complaint are open to prisoners held in the *(a)* public sector prison estate and *(b)* private prison estate to make formal complaints about the health and medical services. [21788]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoners have access to the national health service complaints process in prisons where the NHS commissions health services. Prison Service Instruction 14/2005, "Handling Complaints about Prison Health Care", which provides the relevant guidance, is available op the Prison Service website at www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/psispsos/listpsis.

Work is under way with the Health Service Ombudsman, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman and the Health Care Commission to ensure that an equivalent complaints process is in place for prisoners in contracted prisons.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many members of prison staff have been referred to the police for dealing in drugs in each of the last eight years. [21852]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not recorded centrally.

Where prison staff are suspected of, or accused of committing any criminal act, which includes dealing in drugs, the matter is referred to the police for investigation or action.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the incidence of overcrowding in prisons; and what assessment he has made of the consequences of overcrowding. [21695]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The key performance target for overcrowding in public sector prisons for 2005–06 is for no more than 24 per cent. of the population, and for the private sector 34.5 per cent. of the population held in accommodation units intended for fewer prisoners. The difference in the targets between the public and private sector prisons reflects their different circumstances. Private sector prisons are generally of a comparatively newer design and construction than their public sector equivalents and better able to safely accommodate higher levels of overcrowding than the public sector estate. At present, there are 23.5 per cent. of prisoners sharing accommodation in crowded conditions in the public sector and 24.9 per cent. in the private sector. This is kept under review.

Population pressures can result in greater numbers of prisoners required to share cells in crowded conditions. Higher numbers of prisoners may also affect the provision of regimes in some prisons. Everything possible will continue to be done to minimise any disruption.

School Security (London)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to ensure that schools in London have adequate security in place to prevent them being attacked by terrorists. [16965]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

We believe that existing security advice to schools remains sufficient. It includes pointing schools towards MI5's advice on protective security against terrorism. The employer in each school is responsible for managing their own school's safety.

Secure Training Centres

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many members of staff have *(a)* joined and *(b)* left each secure training centre in each year since they came into operation. [10982]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 11 July 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 596W to my hon. Friend, the Member for Finchley and Golders Green (Dr. Vis).

Sentencing

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the need for pre-sentence reports in criminal cases where there is a guilty plea and where there are no non-custodial sentencing options on conviction. [19787]

Fiona Mactaggart: *[holding answer 19 October 2005]:* It is for the court to request a pre-sentence report (PSR). The Probation Service is statutorily obliged to provide a pre-sentence report when the court requests one. The Probation Service would normally provide a PSR in all cases where custody is a possibility. A PSR would not usually be provided where an offender has been found guilty of murder and a life sentence is the only possible disposal.

Sexual Harm Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many risk of sexual harm orders have been issued in the last six months. [21723]

Paul Goggins: The data requested is not currently available. The most recent published data pre-dates the use of risk of sexual harm orders which were introduced in May 2004.

Terrorism

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the evolution of the terrorist career path; what progress the Government is making to develop a comprehensive interventions strategy to turn people from this path; and if he will make a statement. [17644]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government has been working with the intelligence agencies and communities to develop our understanding of the ways in which our young people can be attracted to terrorism. Over the summer Home Office Ministers conducted a series of meetings, speaking to over 1,000 local faith and community representatives to gather their views on tackling extremism.

In addition, I announced three proposals developed by the Preventing Extremism Together (PET) working groups, to tackle extremism and its underlying causes on 22 September. These are:

(*a*) a National Advisory Council for Imams and Mosques;

(*b*) a National Forum against Extremism and Islamophobia and;

(*c*) a National Road show of populist religious scholars.

There are many other proposals coming from the PET groups and they are working with officials to develop these further and report back to me by the end of October.

Witness Care Units

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many local criminal justice board areas have at least one witness care unit; and if he will make a statement. [21976]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are now 118 witness care units up and running, with at least one in each local criminal justice board area. By the end of December this year, there will be 165 units live, providing an enhanced level of service to victims and witnesses across the whole of England and Wales.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Barristers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the 10 barristers who received the highest payments from the civil legal aid budget in the last financial year; how much each received; and if she will make a statement. [23496]

Bridget Prentice: I refer my hon. Friend to my letter to him of 14 September pursuant to my previous answer on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 170W. In the letter I enclosed tables listing the 12 highest paid barristers from the CDS and the CLS in each of the last three years. A copy of the letter and the tables were placed in the House of Commons Library.

In line with the DCA's publication scheme, the tables are also on the Department's website at www.dca.gov.uk.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21912]

Bridget Prentice: My Department attaches great importance to ensuring that all correspondence receives an appropriate response without delay. All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

My Department began a project to improve the handling of correspondence from hon. Members in July 2004; performance against its 20-working day target in that year was 64 per cent. (and 88 per cent. in the second half of 2004) and performance in 2005 is projected to be 92 per cent.

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from members of the public. [21913]

Bridget Prentice: My Department attaches great importance to ensuring that all correspondence receives an appropriate response without delay. All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

My Department began a project to improve the handling of correspondence from members of the public in April 2005; performance against its 15-working day target in 2004 was 73 per cent. and performance in 2005 is projected to be 80 per cent.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much energy has been consumed by her Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22457]

Ms Harman: The amount of energy consumed each year, by my Department, since 2000 is provided within the following table. Also included within the table is the cost of the energy consumed.

	Total cost (£)	*Annual consumption (kWh)*	*Weather corrected annual consumption (kWh)*
2000-01	4,591,211.00	163,981,500.00	163,981,500.00
2001-02	4,983,831.00	149,684,200.00	149,684,200.00
2002-03	5,111,945.00	169,236,800.00	169,236,800.00
2003-04	5,328,156.00	176,411,580.00	176,411,580.00
2004-05	6,031,199.78	177,477,430.61	188,547,808.60

Elections

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many complaints she has received from individuals in relation to being unable to vote in *(a)* local, *(b)* general and *(c)* European elections in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [21989]

Ms Harman: This information is not systematically collected or permanently recorded. However, In 2005, complaints were received from individuals in respect of being unable to vote in the general election held this year as set out below.

Category	*Number*
Non-registration	61
Postal voting time limits	34
Non-eligibility of foreign nationals	15
Minimum age too high	15
Overseas voters, limitation of eligibility	12
Administrative errors	5
Convicted and detained prisoners	4
Non-receipt of pollcard	4
Other	5

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will deposit a copy of each submission to the Department's consultation on the Electoral Administration Bill in the Library. [23637]

Ms Harman: We received over 160 responses, within the deadline, to the policy paper on electoral administration which was put out on 25 May this year.

On Tuesday 11 October, alongside introduction of the Electoral Administration Bill, we published a paper which detailed and analysed the responses received. Copies of the paper were put into the Libraries of both Houses on that day.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs why the Department's announcement of 12 October 2005 on plans for pilots of electoral modernisation in the 2006 elections was not made in Parliament. [23635]

Ms Harman: The Department have issued an invitation to local authorities having elections in May 2006 to apply to run electoral modernisation pilots under S. 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000. When, following consultation with the Electoral Commission, a decision is made on which pilots to approve, an announcement will be made to the House.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Electoral Commission regarding the potential for postal vote fraud. [22476]

Ms Harman: Regular discussions take place between officials from my Department, the independent Electoral Commission and me on a wide range of electoral issues, including measures to prevent postal voting fraud.

This was one if the issues discussed when I met with the chairman, chief executive and other officials from the Commission on 19 October.

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on voting arrangements for military service personnel serving *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* abroad. [21519]

Ms Harman: The Government has increased the voting options for service personnel. As a result of the RPA 2000, service personnel have been able to vote by post as an alternative to appointing a proxy. The Government is committed to ensuring that all members of the Armed Forces are aware of their voting rights. To achieve this we are working with the independent Electoral Commission to run a publicity campaign, which has consisted of voting information being displayed in a leaflet, that is being distributed to all members of the Armed Forces, and on service websites.

Ethnic Minorities

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the recommendations in the Legal Services Commission's consultation paper "Improving Value for Money" on the number of ethnic minorities carrying out publicly-funded legal work in London. [22323]

Ms Harman: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) is strongly committed to promoting diversity within the supplier base and is aware of the concerns of small black and minority ethnic (BME) firms providing London based criminal defence services.

The potential impact of competitive tendering upon BME firms was raised in the consultation paper "Improving value for money for publicly funded criminal defence services in London", published in January 2005. The LSC has been working closely with both BME suppliers and their representative bodies throughout the consultation process to address any concerns they may have.

The LSC have also commissioned research into the issues faced by BME firms within the legal aid supplier base. This research will help to cultivate further measures to protect small black and minority ethnic suppliers against unfair discrimination and is expected to report this month.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21302] and [23224]

Bridget Prentice: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the Departmental Annual Reports. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Reports and at aggregate level in the Pre-Budget Report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21312] and [23223]

Bridget Prentice: The Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's Efficiency programme.

Judges

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the effective rate of employer contributions is to final salary pension schemes in the public sector for judges. [21588]

Bridget Prentice: The employer's accruing superannuation liability charge (ASLCs) is set at 29.25 per cent. (including 0.25 per cent. as a contribution to the scheme's administration) of pensionable judicial salaries, after allowing for members' contributions of 3 per cent. or 4 per cent. of pensionable salaries. The contribution rate is set following each valuation of the scheme. The last valuation was as at 31 March 2005. As a result of that valuation the ASLCs rate will increase to 30.75 per cent. from 1 April 2006.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made in the appointing of women to senior posts in the judiciary in Northern Ireland; and if she will make a statement. [22824]

Bridget Prentice: Increasing numbers of women are being appointed to the judiciary in Northern Ireland. Two of the last five appointments to the county court bench were women.

The Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 changed the eligibility requirement for judicial appointments to require a prescribed number of years standing as a barrister or solicitor rather than, as previously, a prescribed number of years in practice. This change will ensure that women who take a career break from legal practice are not disadvantaged.

The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission which was established in June 2005 now has responsibility for recommendations for judicial appointments, and one of its statutory responsibilities is to engage in a programme of action which is designed to secure, so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so (and consistent with appointment on merit), appointments to the judiciary such that those holding such offices are reflective of the community in Northern Ireland.

Legal Aid

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what special arrangements are in place for legal aid to non-English speakers; and if she will make a statement. [22475]

Bridget Prentice: In criminal cases, legal aid funding provides for the services of an interpreter when an individual is arrested and held at a police station. Once the case is heard at court, an interpreter for the defendant is arranged and funded by Her Majesty's Court Service.

For civil cases, interpreter fees are allowable in principle as a supplier disbursement in all categories of law, both for preparation work and in court. The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal will pay for interpreters where required for appellants for in country immigration and asylum proceedings.

In addition, free quality legal advice and information is available through the community legal service direct telephone line and website. All CLS direct services are available in English and Welsh. The telephone helpline has access to a translator service for alternative languages, and sections of the website are translated into Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Turkish and Urdu. From 31 October 2005, the CDS direct service will be piloted, providing an interpreter service to non-English speaking clients entitled to telephone advice.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research has been commissioned on the reasons for individuals opting to take up legal aid. [22477]

Bridget Prentice: No recent research has been commissioned by the Department of Constitutional Affairs or the Legal Services Commission specifically on the reasons for individuals opting to take up legal aid. However, studies tasked with investigating other aspects of the justice system do occasionally include some consideration of the reasons for take-up of legal aid.

Additionally, the Legal Aid Board—which predated the Legal Services Commission—published a "Study into Reasons for Refusal of Offers of Contributory Civil Legal Aid" in 1994.

Magistrates (Merseyside)

Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made with the recruitment of magistrates in Merseyside. [19704]

Ms Harman: There is a managed recruitment campaign on Merseyside, aimed at encouraging members of the community to apply for the magistracy.

During the year ending 31 March 2005, 54 magistrates were recruited across the Merseyside region. Since 1 April this year, 78 magistrates have been recruited.

We are currently supporting the local advisory committees' plans to recruit a further 235 magistrates. Together, we launched a major press and radio campaign on 15 September 2005. This was supplemented by an open evening at Liverpool magistrates court on 19 October.

The campaign has so far attracted 569 requests for application packs and the local advisory committees have received a total of 55 completed applications to date.

Unsafe Monuments

Hywel Williams: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she will publish guidance to local authorities on unsafe monuments. [23569]

Ms Harman: We recognise the need for consistent guidance which will promote effective practice by burial authorities in dealing with unstable gravestones.

We have recently reviewed existing guidance by practitioners on this subject. We are now planning discussions with burial authorities and other interested parties over the coming months and, subject to a successful conclusion, we intend to publish guidance.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Animal Welfare Demonstrations

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of policing animal welfare demonstrations in Northern Ireland was in each of the last 25 years. [23385]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the PSNI finance department does not hold such information on a central financial record/database. Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Northern Ireland since their introduction, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [22436]

Mr. Hanson: Five interim antisocial behaviour orders on application have been granted in Northern Ireland to date; one in the Belfast city council area, two in the Larne borough council area, and two in the Coleraine borough council area. Data are not collected by parliamentary constituency.

Information on antisocial behaviour orders by conviction is not collected centrally and would be available only at disproportionate cost. It is intended that this information will be captured by the Northern Ireland court service through their Integrated Court Operation System (ICOS) which is due to be rolled out from early next year.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults in Northern Ireland have been identified as suffering from an autistic spectrum disorder; how this number has changed in the last three years; and how he expects the numbers to change over the next three years. [22799]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Assets Recovery Agency

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much *(a)* property and *(b)* other assets have been (i) frozen and (ii) recovered in Northern Ireland by the Assets Recovery Agency. [21178]

Mr. Woodward: The amount of property and other assets frozen and recovered in Northern Ireland by the Assets Recovery Agency is detailed in the following table:

£ million

	Assets frozen	*Assets recovered*	*Receipts*
March 2003–04	3.1	[1,2]	[2]0.002
2004–05	3.7	1.4	0.7
2005–06[3]	1.7	0.1	0.4

[1] None
[2] First full year of operation
[3] To date

Big Lottery Fund

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* sex and *(b)* religious breakdown is of the full-time equivalent staff employed in the Big Lottery Fund's Belfast office. [22891]

Mr. Hanson: A total of 55 full-time equivalents are currently employed in the Big Lottery Fund's Belfast office, which equates to 57 staff. Of these 44 are female and 13 are male. The religious breakdown of employees is 26 Protestant, 26 Roman Catholic and five who are neither.

Breast Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research has been carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to ascertain the success rate in the Province for the treatment of breast cancer. [22674]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety funds the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR), which undertakes a wide range of statistical research into success rates for the treatment of various cancers, including breast cancer. It has recently published a major report on breast cancer which is a further significant step in the evaluation of cancer care here—"Gavin A, Kinnear H, Fitzpatrick D, Ranaghan L, 2005. Cancer Services Audit 1996 & 2001, Breast. N. Ireland Cancer Registry". In addition, the Research and Development Office (RDO), which is also funded by my Department, established a Cancer Recognised Research Group in 2000–01. This comprises 15 research programmes in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancers. A number of individual research projects currently funded by the RDO are specifically related to breast cancer treatment.

The success rate for the treatment of breast cancer is dependent on a range of factors including the stage of the disease at diagnosis. Latest published figures from NICR, based on persons diagnosed in the period 1996–99, show that the one-year relative survival rate for breast cancer is 95.2 per cent. while the five-year relative survival rate is 81.5 per cent. These rates are very good in comparison with other cancers but the fact that survival is already high makes it more difficult to measure improvements over time.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is taking to reduce waiting times for women with breast disease who have been referred to a specialist by their general practitioner; and if he will make a statement. [23382]

Mr. Woodward: In Northern Ireland, patients with suspected breast cancer are expected to be assessed by a specialist within two weeks of urgent referral by their GP. The Department of Health, social services and public safety is working with Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with this target.

Computer Theft

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer to question 19587, what action was taken between 2001 and 2005 in relation to the five cases of computer theft from his Department where all legal proceedings have been completed. [22890]

Mr. Woodward: There have been no legal proceedings in relation to the five cases of computer theft.

Consultant Referrals

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioner referrals to consultants there were in each Northern Ireland health board area in each of the last five years; and what percentage this was of the total number of general practitioner appointments, excluding those that did not attend. [22814]

Mr. Woodward: Information is collected on the number of written referral requests from a general practitioner (GP) received by hospitals during the time period. The number of written GP referral requests received by hospitals in each Health Board area in each of the past five years is shown in the following table. Note that 2004–05 data are provisional.

Board which received request	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
EHSSB	172,547	176,375	176,700	180,197	185,349
NHSSB	54,617	54,265	57,500	58,619	58,856
SHSSB	59,169	59,202	58,795	59,354	60,276
WHSSB	59,883	59,584	60,547	61,004	61,540
NI total	346,216	349,426	353,542	359,174	366,021

[1] Provisional.

The number of GP appointments is not available and therefore a percentage cannot be calculated.

Costello Working Group

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the dates of minuted meetings held by the Costello Working Group; [21326]

(2) if he will list the titles of discussion papers commissioned by the Costello Working Group; [21327]

(3) if he will place in the Library of the House copies of the *(a)* minutes and *(b)* discussion papers produced by the Costello Working Group. [21328]

Angela E. Smith: All meetings of the Post-Primary Review Working Group were minuted. The meetings took place on the following dates in 2003; 5, 12, 19/20 June; 2/3 July; 13/14, 28 August; 4/5, 10/11, 18, 29/30 September; 3, 8, 14, 28 October; and 6, 14, 21, 28 November. I have arranged for copies of the published minutes to be placed in the Library.

At its 5th meeting on 13 and 14 August, the Group asked the secretariat to prepare a discussion paper on the various issues identified at that meeting. A paper entitled "Strategic Policy Framework", was considered at the meeting on 28 August. The Working Group did not produce discussion papers.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21119]

Mr. Hanson: All new recruits to the general grades in the Northern Ireland Office must satisfy a minimum academic standard—two GCSEs or equivalent including English for Grade D2, increasing to five for Grade D1. Other new employees have to meet different requirements or standards relevant to the specialism of the specific post/grade.

If any member of staff should ask for help in developing their literacy and numeracy skills the Department would seek to meet the requirement through the Knowledge Programme which includes literacy, numeracy and computer based skills.

Disability Vehicle Stickers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines are in place in Northern Ireland for the issuing of official disability vehicle stickers. [22887]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Peter Robinson, dated 31 October 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what guidelines are in place for the issuing of official disability vehicle stickers. I have been asked to reply as the issue raised falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I can advise that disabled people are currently automatically entitled to a badge if they:

receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance;

receive a War pensioners' Mobility Supplement;

use a motor vehicle supplied for disabled people by a Government Health Department;

are registered blind; or

have a severe disability in both upper limbs, regularly drive a motor vehicle but cannot turn the steering wheel of a motor vehicle by hand even if that wheel is fitted with a turning knob.

There is also a discretionary criterion, assessed by Roads Service (or local authorities in Great Britain), whereby disabled people can receive a badge if they 'have a permanent and substantial disability which means they are unable to walk or have very considerable difficulty in walking'. In this case applicants are asked to answer a series of questions to help Roads Service determine whether they are eligible for a badge. Roads Service may also seek supporting information from the applicant's General Practitioner.

Organisations caring for disabled people meeting one or more of the above criteria may also be able to get their own institutional badge, but this is entirely at Roads Service's/local authorities' discretion.

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to ensure that those using disabled parking bays in car parks open to the general public in Northern Ireland are drivers with a valid disabled blue badge applicable to the vehicle in question. [22434]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Gregory Campbell, dated 27 October 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding, what steps are being taken to ensure that those using disabled parking bays in car parks open to the general public in Northern Ireland are drivers with a valid disabled Blue Badge applicable to the vehicle in question.

I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Firstly, I should explain that a Blue Badge is issued to a disabled person for their personal use. It does not limit the disabled person to a particular vehicle and can legitimately be used in any vehicle in which the disabled person in question is travelling. When a Blue Badge is displayed on a vehicle, only the serial number and date of expiry are visible to someone making a routine inspection. Other information, such as a photograph of the disabled person and their signature, are not immediately visible.

The purpose of the Disabled Persons Badge Scheme (the Blue Badge Scheme) is to give disabled people the ability to park on-street, close to the facilities and services they need so as to improve their lifestyle, independence and freedom of choice. The scheme only applies to on-street car parking. A Blue Badge does not entitle the holder to free parking within a Roads Service off-street fee paying public car park. Therefore, there is no monetary benefit to be gained from the improper use of a Blue Badge within a fee paying public car park. For other off-street private car parks, such as shopping centres and multi-storey car parks, badge holders must check the concessions offered, as these can vary widely.

Responsibility for the enforcement of off-street disabled parking spaces in public car parks currently rests with Roads Service. Article 6 of the Off-Street Parking (NI) Order 2000 prohibits the driver of a vehicle, other than a disabled person's vehicle, to park in a disabled parking space. Contravention of this Article is an offence, and in such circumstances, Roads Service has the power to remove the vehicle or instigate proceedings to prosecute the individual involved.

However, our experience is that there is not a major difficulty with the misuse of off-street disabled parking spaces. This may be explained by the considerable concessions for Blue Badge holders at on- street parking facilities, including free unlimited parking at on-street 'pay and display' equipment. Other on-street parking concessions also permit a Blue Badge holder to leave their vehicle without time limit in a street where waiting is normally allowed only for limited periods. Blue Badge holders may also, in some areas, leave their vehicle for up to 3 hours on many yellow lines.

It is therefore our policy to discourage potential offenders and where disabled persons' interests can be protected by persuasion, rather that prosecution, so much the better. To this end when car park attendants discover a vehicle parked in a disabled parking space without having a Blue Badge on display, they place a notice on the vehicle advising the driver that he/she is parked in a space reserved for disabled people. The notice also advises that such parking is an offence that may result in a fine or the vehicle being removed.

I should also advise that following the PSNI's decision to withdraw from the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions, to enable policing resources to be focused on areas of greater policing priority, DRD has introduced new primary legislation, the Traffic Management (NI) Order 2005. This legislation provides the necessary legislative power to introduce civil enforcement of certain road traffic offences, initially enforcement of parking and waiting prohibitions and restrictions. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) is likely to become effective in late September/early October 2006.

Under DPE, traffic attendants will be able to inspect Blue Badges to check for abuse of the system and may issue a Penalty Charge Notice if misuse is suspected. If this happens, Roads Service will write to the holder of the badge and inform them that it has been used inappropriately. Should this happen on a number of occasions Roads Service may withdraw the disabled persons' badge. Vehicles not displaying a Blue Badge, but parked in an on-street disabled parking space, will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice.

I hope this information is helpful.

Firearms

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* incidents of serious injury involving legally held firearms, excluding Police Service of Northern Ireland and army firearms, there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [22998]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable has advised me that their Central Statistics Unit and Firearms and Explosives Branch do not hold records or statistics that would enable this question to be answered.

Foster Carers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered foster carers there have been in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [22767]

Mr. Woodward: The routine collection of data by the Department on the numbers of registered foster carers in Northern Ireland commenced in 2001. In addition, a figure is available for 1997 from a fostering inspection report published by the Social Services Inspectorate showing that at that time there were 1,380 foster carers in Northern Ireland. The available data are presented in the following table:

Registered foster carers at quarter ending June

	Number
2001	1,137
2002	1,210
2003	1,192
2004	1,248
2005	1,308

Health Authority Finances

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cumulative deficit is for each strategic health authority in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [22639]

Mr. Woodward: Strategic health authorities do not exist in Northern Ireland. Their nearest equivalent is Health and Social Services Boards. The four boards are

required to achieve at least a financial break-even position each financial year and I can confirm that none of the four has incurred a cumulative deficit.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research he has commissioned on the perceptions of small and medium sized businesses in Northern Ireland of the effectiveness and accessibility of Invest Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [22435]

Angela E. Smith: Invest NI has not specifically researched the perceptions of the entire small and medium enterprise (SME) business sector in Northern Ireland. In March 2005, however, the agency initiated a Client Satisfaction Survey which focused on its client company base, over 95 per cent. of which comprises businesses falling within the EU definition of a SME. Independent consultants were recruited to carry out this research, which covered all key Invest NI programme areas including Business Improvement, Research and Development and Trade.

The survey disclosed that clients' participation in Invest NI programmes had increased significantly, generating high levels of client satisfaction. The research also demonstrated high levels of communication taking place between Invest NI and its clients, through face-to-face meetings and a variety of other forms of communication. Client companies also expressed satisfaction with the overall quality of service delivered by their Invest NI client executive.

The survey identified a number of areas where improvement could usefully be made and Invest NI is actively working to address these as part of its commitment to increase its customer focus and service delivery.

Meningococcal Infection

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many confirmed cases of meningococcal infection there have been in each NHS board area in each of the last five years. [22811]

Mr. Woodward: The number of confirmed cases of meningococcal infection within each Health Board for the last five years is shown in the following table.

Health Board	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[1]
Eastern	27	22	20	23	16
Northern	27	28	33	18	13
Southern	12	22	18	13	11
Western	15	11	12	16	6
Northern Ireland	81	83	83	70	46

[1] Figures for 2005 are up until the last confirmed case, 26 October 2005.

Notes:

1. Information is based on Enhanced Surveillance of Meningococcal Disease.
2. Figures relate to calendar years.

Source:

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre NI (CDSCNI).

NHS Dentistry

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was for access to NHS dental services in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [22756]

Mr. Woodward: The majority of health service dentistry is carried out by general dental practitioners, who are independent contractors. Information on waiting lists for these services is not held centrally.

Waiting lists are collected for inpatients (both ordinary admissions and day cases) awaiting admission to NHS hospitals and outpatients awaiting their first appointment in an NHS hospital. This information is collected by specialty and by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean (average) length of time waiting. It is, however, possible to identify the median or mid point waiting time band:

(a) The median waiting time for inpatients who were waiting in the oral surgery or paediatric dentistry specialties at 30 June 2005 was 0–2 months.

(b) The median waiting time for outpatients who were waiting for their first appointment at 30 June 2005 was 3–5 months in the paediatric dentistry or orthodontics specialties and was 6–8 months in the oral surgery or restorative dentistry specialties.

NICE Guidelines

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of extending National Institute for Healthcare and Clinical Excellence guidelines to Northern Ireland. [22823]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has assessed National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance and has been developing proposals for applying this guidance in Northern Ireland. I hope to make an announcement shortly on arrangements for implementing the institute's guidance in Northern Ireland.

Parades Commission

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications have to date been received for membership of the Parades Commission, broken down by *(a)* political affiliation, *(b)* gender and *(c)* ethnicity; and if he will make a statement. [20777]

Mr. Woodward: The Government are committed to ensuring, so far as is practicable, that the Parades Commission is representative of the people of Northern Ireland. The current appointments expire on 31 December. A reappointments process began on 25 July and is on schedule.

We have received 94 applications for membership of the Parades Commission and 49 applications for the position of chair. We are pleased with the volume and quality of applications received from both sides of the community.

The process is being run in close co-operation with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). An OCPA independent assessor is one of three panel members sifting and interviewing applicants for both chair and membership.

As the appointment process is currently ongoing, it is not considered appropriate to reveal the monitoring information at this time.

Paramilitary Groups

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he plans to take to encourage loyalist paramilitary organisations to decommission their weapons. [22737]

Mr. Woodward: On 26 September 2005 the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning determined that the IRA had met its commitment to put all its arms beyond use in a manner called for by the legislation. The report recognised that the arms of the loyalist paramilitary groups, as well as other paramilitary organisations, remain to be addressed.

On 21 September 2005 the Secretary of State announced that David Hanson would be taking the lead on engaging with representatives from the protestant/loyalist communities.

As well as socio-economic measures, there will continue to be engagement with political representatives of loyalism.

But be in no doubt, there will continue to be a robust security response to loyalist criminality.

It is essential that we continue to build upon the encouraging signs reported by the Independent Monitoring Commission in their assessment of 19 October and that all paramilitary groups fully decommission their weapons. We call on all those with influence to help bring this to an early conclusion.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of paramilitary-style crimes committed in each month since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement by *(a)* Loyalist and *(b)* Republican groups, broken down by category of offence; and if he will make a statement. [22847]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in exactly the format requested. However, since April 2004 the Independent Monitoring Commission has monitored and reported on paramilitary-style crimes and involvement in organised crime. The Commission has presented seven reports to date with detailed analysis of paramilitary activity.

In addition, the Police Service of Northern Ireland holds up to date and comprehensive statistical analysis on crime and security in Northern Ireland. The information can be accessed on PSNIs website at www.psni.police.uk

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many criminal cases were prosecuted against persons linked to *(a)* Loyalist and *(b)* Republican paramilitary groups in each of the last five years. [21557]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of criminal cases prosecuted against persons who are linked to either loyalist or republican paramilitary groups is not collected.

Details of the number of persons that have been charged with terrorist and serious public order offences, broken down by affiliation, have been collected since April 2003 and are contained in the following table:

Persons charged with terrorist and serious public order offences 2003–04 to 2004–05 [1]

	2003–04		2004–05	
Type of charge	*Loyalist*	*Republican*	*Loyalist*	*Republican*
Murder	8	1	3	0
Attempted murder	9	1	2	2
Firearms offences	32	17	27	14
Explosive offences	3	5	0	15
Armed robbery	8	0	1	6
Other[2]	83	63	27	47
Total	143	87	60	84

[1] Statistics include only the most serious offence with which a person is charged and refer to charges brought against a person after the original period of detention (including extensions). Any subsequent changes, additions, deletions to the original charges are not included.
[2] Other includes hijacking, petrol bomb offences, membership, withholding information, arson and rioting.

Perinatal Mental Illness

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women in Northern Ireland were diagnosed with a perinatal mental illness in each of the last five years. [22815]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not collected in the form requested and is therefore not available.

Operation Viper

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what method the Police Service of Northern Ireland uses when choosing the area to target in a motoring offence operation such as Operation Viper; [21174]

(2) if he will list the streets and roads in the greater Belfast area used by the Police Service of Northern Ireland during Operation Viper. [21250]

Mr. Woodward: The aim of Operation Viper is to reduce the number of road deaths and identify drivers who break the law. Through Operation Viper the Police Service of Northern Ireland target dangerous and careless drivers, motorists travelling with excess speed or without wearing seatbelts and drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

All [illegible] urban region district command units were [illegible] as part of Op. Viper on the most recent [illegible] occasion. Providing details of the precise areas patrolled [illegible] diminish operational effectiveness.

Police

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers from police forces in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales have taken up duties with the police in Northern Ireland in the last three years. [23231]

Mr. Woodward: Information held centrally does not disclose what police force officers left to join PSNI. To obtain this information would involve a manual trawl of records held by the PSNI recruitment contractor and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

A total of 54 officers have been recruited on a permanent basis as follows:

41 officers recruited via recruitment competitions for Constables (50/50) who were from other UK police forces.

10 Detective Constables were appointed from other UK forces having been successful in a competition run by Consensia in 2003. The purpose of this competition was to address experiential gaps prevailing at that time in the organisation.

Three officers entered in ranks other than Constable via our nationally advertised promotion competitions. All entered at the rank of Sergeant. All three came from the metropolitan police service.

In addition six officers have been seconded in this period, including two recently seconded chief inspectors to the historical enquiry team.

Post-primary School Admissions

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of the recent consultation on new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools. [22644]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of the consultation on new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools to date is £71,971.

Private Security Industry

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made in developing proposals for the regulation of the private security industry in Northern Ireland. [22806]

Mr. Woodward: Work is under way in developing a permanent regulatory regime for the private security industry in Northern Ireland as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced in his Written Statement to the House on 24 May 2005. We intend to publish proposals for consultation as soon as detailed work has been completed. Meanwhile the industry continues to be regulated under the temporary scheme contained in Schedule 13 to The Terrorism Act 2000.

Public Libraries

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many public libraries were open in each of the education and library board areas in Northern Ireland at the end of 2004; and how many are expected to be open in each board area by the end of 2006. [23234]

Mr. Hanson: There were 126 branch libraries in 2004.

A table showing the comparative breakdown by education and library board is as follows.

Board	*31 December 2004*	*October 2005*
WELB	16	15
SEELB	26	24
BELB	21	21
NEELB	38	29
SELB	25	24
Total	126	113

Currently no decisions have been made to close further libraries.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many posts were declared redundant in each of the education and library boards in each of the last three years; and how many of these posts were filled again within one year. [21235]

Angela E. Smith: The information provided in the following table is in respect of compulsory and voluntary redundancies for non-teaching staff in each of the education and library boards and includes school based and non-school based staff. I am assured by boards that none of the posts declared redundant was filled again within one year.

Redundancies

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
NEELB	28	38	41
BELB	15	61	49
SELB	16	16	61
WELB	20	21	36
SEELB	Not available	50	109

[1] This is the position at 24 October 2005 on redundancies that have been approved by the boards. Boards are still examining the position in regard to further redundancies.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the total cost of redundancy packages has been in each of the education and library boards in each of the last three years. (21236) [21236]

Angela E. Smith: The information provided in the following table are the costs in respect of compulsory and voluntary redundancies for non-teaching staff in each of the education and library boards and includes school based and non-school based staff. The costs include redundancy pay, compensatory lump sum and actuarial costs. The long term savings for each board as a result of these redundancies will be significantly in excess of the redundancy costs.

Redundancy costs

£

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
NEELB	28,652	95,022	103,583
BELB	335,000	1,416,000	873,000
SELB	72,265	223,985	841,955
WELB	108,742	316,137	256,567
SEELB	62,635	1,010,384	567,965
Total	607,294	3,061,528	2,643,070

[1] Not all invoices from NILGOSC in respect of actuarial costs for redundancies in 2005–06 have yet been received.

Respiratory Diseases

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on respiratory disease in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [22990]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Road Commuting

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the change in commuting time for motorists between Sandyknowes

roundabout and Belfast city centre during the morning rush hour period, from 7.45 am to 9.15 am, over the last 10 years. [23233]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 31 October 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding his estimate of the change in commuting time for motorists between Sandyknowes roundabout and Belfast City Centre during the morning rush hour period, 7.45am to 9.15am, over the last 10 years.

I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service monitors journey time surveys on the strategic routes in Northern Ireland including the route from Larne to Belfast to Newry (A8, M2, M1 and A1). These surveys commenced in 1996 and the most recent information available is for 2003.

Unfortunately, we have no journey time information that relates to the specific journey between Sandyknowes and Belfast City Centre. However, a comparison of journey times between Sandyknowes and the Divis Street junction on Westlink would suggest that the average journey time in the morning peak over this section has increased by 2 to 3 minutes between 1996 and 2003.

This excludes the significant delays experienced by southbound traffic approaching Sandyknowes on the M2. Roads Service acknowledges that these delays are a direct result of capacity restrictions downstream of Sandyknowes where only 2 traffic lanes are available to cater for both mainline M2 traffic and the considerable flow joining the motorway from Sandyknowes roundabout. Consequently we plan to widen the Belfast-bound carriageway of the M2 motorway to create an additional southbound lane between the Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions. This will make it easier for traffic to join the M2 from the Sandyknowes junction, particularly during the morning peak traffic, and also provide greater capacity on the Belfast-bound section of the M2 towards Greencastle. Construction of these improvements on the M2 is expected to start during 2008.

The £30 million M2 Widening Scheme is one of three schemes forming part of the £100 million Roads Service Design, Build, Finance and Operate Package 1, along with the M1/Westlink Project and the Antrim Hospital slip roads.

I can also advise that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan proposes modifications to the Sandyknowes roundabout to minimise conflicts between different traffic movements and afford greater priority to the strategic M2 and A8 movements. Roads Service is currently investigating various design options.

I hope this information is helpful.

Robert McCartney

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are investigating the murder of Robert McCartney. [22994]

Mr. Woodward: PSNI have confirmed that a team of officers under the leadership of a senior investigating officer are investigating the murder of Robert McCartney. The allocation of police resources is, however, a matter for the Chief Constable.

Secure Training Centres

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many young people have been admitted to hospital from secure training centres in Northern Ireland in each of the last four years. [21647]

Mr. Hanson: There are no secure training centres within Northern Ireland. The Juvenile Justice Centre, which houses children aged 10 to 17, records such information on individual children's medical files but does not aggregate the data as there are very few occasions when this happens. The information requested is not therefore held centrally.

Security

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in the Province. [22735]

Mr. Woodward: The security situation is improving. The latest Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) report stated that the initial signs following the Provisional IRA statement were encouraging. However, paramilitaries, especially Loyalists and dissident Republicans, continue to exert a malign influence over communities.

The Secretary of State published an updated normalisation programme on 1 August. This will be taken forward, provided the enabling environment is maintained.

St. Luke's Hospital

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what procedures have changed in relation to what personal items patients have use of in ward 3 of St. Luke's Hospital, Armagh since the death of Michelle Fitzpatrick on 25 March 2002. [21859]

Mr. Woodward: Following this young women's death a multidisciplinary meeting was held to review her care and treatment. A number of recommendations were made including a risk assessment of all identified and possible ligature points and current nursing observation levels in acute and intensive care units. These recommendations were actioned, however there were no specific recommendations in the use of personal items.

Staff Assaults

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what costs were incurred by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety as a result of attacks on fire crews and their vehicles over the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [22635]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables detail the cost resulting from attacks on fire crews and their vehicles over the last three years.

Cost of injuries to fire fighters as a result of attacks (days lost and ill-health retirements)

	£
2002	45,583
2003	3,031
2004	4,436
Total	53,050

Cost of repair to damaged fire appliances

	£
2002	2,714
2003	2,047
2004	1,794
Total	6,555

While there has been a year on year reduction in the number of attacks, the safety of fire fighters while carrying out their duties remains of paramount importance. Legislation is being introduced early next year to ensure that the perpetrators of such attacks will be prosecuted. Attacks on fire fighters and their equipment not only puts fire crews at risk, but also reduces their ability to deliver vital services, which may have tragic results for those unfortunate enough to be trapped by fire.

Surplus School Places

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many surplus places there were in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each education and library board area in (i) 2000 and (ii) 2005; and what the projected number of such places is in (A) 2012 and (B) 2015 in each case, broken down by type of school management. [21502]

Angela E. Smith: In the 2000–01 school year, there were an estimated 12,200 surplus places in controlled primary schools and 12,900 surplus places in maintained primary schools. In the 2004–05 school year these figures increased to an estimated 15,800 in both sectors. In 2000–01 in post-primary schools, there were an estimated 6,500 surplus places in controlled schools and 6,900 in maintained schools. In 2004–05 these figures increased to an estimated 7,500 and 8,200 respectively. The following table shows the breakdown of the figures requested by education and library board area. Figures for the 2005–06 school year are not yet available.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency projections indicate that the number of children of compulsory school age is set to decline by a further 30,000 over the next 10 years. The Department's pupil projection figures are only currently available to the period 2011–12 and these indicate that primary school numbers will fall from an estimated 162,200 in 2004–05 to 147,600 in 2011–12, (a reduction of 14,600 pupils) and that post-primary school numbers will fall from an estimated 152,600 to 140,100 in the same period, (a reduction of 12,500 pupils). It is not possible to break down these projected figures by management type. The projected fall in pupil numbers will not necessarily lead to a corresponding increase in surplus places—changes to the schools' estate in the intervening period, through the major capital works programme and as a result of proposals from school authorities for closures or amalgamations should remove a considerable number of surplus places.

Surplus places

		2000–01		*2004–05*	
Board area/ school type	*Sector*	*Number of schools with surplus places*	*Estimated number of surplus places*	*Number of schools with surplus places*	*Estimated number of surplus places*
Belfast					
Primary	Controlled	36	3,900	35	5,300
	Maintained	33	2,700	27	3,900
Post-primary	Controlled	7	1,200	8	1,700
	Maintained	16	1,300	15	1,300
North-Eastern					
Primary	Controlled	56	2,900	44	3,700
	Maintained	39	2,500	32	2,700
Post-primary	Controlled	15	1,700	18	2,000
	Maintained	12	1,900	17	2,200
South-Eastern					
Primary	Controlled	49	3,400	43	4,300
	Maintained	27	1,900	26	2,400
Post-primary	Controlled	11	1,300	17	1,800
	Maintained	8	600	12	700
Southern					
Primary	Controlled	37	1,300	32	1,400
	Maintained	52	2,100	39	2,600
Post-primary	Controlled	17	1,300	16	1,300
	Maintained	16	1,500	14	1,700
Western					
Primary	Controlled	26	700	20	1,100
	Maintained	72	3,700	62	4,300
Post-primary	Controlled	8	900	6	700
	Maintained	24	1,700	27	2,200
Overall totals:		561	38,500	510	47,300

Summary

Totals	2000 Number of schools with surplus places	2000 Estimated number of surplus places	2004 Number of schools with surplus places	2004 Estimated number of surplus places
Primary				
Controlled	204	12,200	174	15,800
Maintained	223	12,900	186	15,800
Post-Primary				
Controlled	58	6,500	65	7,500
Maintained	76	6,900	85	8,200
Totals	561	38,500	510	47,300

Teacher Training Places

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teacher training places the Government are funding in teacher training colleges and universities in Northern Ireland in 2005–06; and how many were funded in each of the last three years. [22331]

Angela E. Smith: The total number of funded teacher training enrolments is as follows:

	Number
2002–03	1922
2003–04	1966
2004–05	1980
2005–06	1961

The number of funded teacher training intakes each year is as follows:

	Number
2002–03	861
2003–04	836
2004–05	830
2005–06	796

Unemployment Statistics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many economically inactive people in Northern Ireland have been recorded as wanting to work in each quarter since 1995. [22752]

Angela E. Smith: The number of economically inactive people recorded as wanting work in each quarter since spring 1995 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Economically inactive people that want work (1995–2005)

Quarter	Economically inactive who want work (000)
1995	
Spring	68
Summer	69
Autumn	62
Winter	57
1996	
Spring	57
Summer	60
Autumn	59
Winter	62
1997	
Spring	59
Summer	58
Autumn	58
Winter	64
1998	
Spring	38
Summer	46
Autumn	55
Winter	63
1999	
Spring	67
Summer	64
Autumn	62
Winter	64
2000	
Spring	63
Summer	65
Autumn	56
Winter	56
2001	
Spring	59
Summer	61
Autumn	61
Winter	57
2002	
Spring	58
Summer	59
Autumn	49
Winter	48
2003	
Spring	54
Summer	59
Autumn	55
Winter	47
2004	
Spring	50
Summer	46
Autumn	38
Winter	37
2005	
Spring	40
Summer	34

Source:
NI Labour Force Survey

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the level of youth unemployment was in each of the Westminster constituencies in the Province in each of the last three years. [22632]

Angela E. Smith: The labour force survey (LFS) is the preferred source of statistics on unemployment, however, it can not be used to provide estimates of youth unemployment at parliamentary constituency level, as the LFS sample size is not large enough to produce reliable estimates of groups that are small in number.

However, average youth unemployment levels from the claimant count in each of the Westminster constituencies in Northern Ireland in each of the years 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 (to September) are provided in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]
Belfast East	385	425	395	340
Belfast North	810	775	695	780
Belfast South	655	625	505	500
Belfast West	1,285	1,145	1,095	1,160
East Antrim	585	545	520	495
East Londonderry	560	540	535	545
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	535	490	370	320
Foyle	1,385	1,325	1,265	1,215
Lagan Valley	310	325	285	290
Mid Ulster	345	295	255	270
Newry and Armagh	645	625	500	455
North Antrim	500	420	405	435
North Down	350	370	325	320
South Antrim	420	395	310	350
South Down	565	560	460	435
Strangford	365	420	400	410
Upper Bann	475	495	415	420
West Tyrone	680	675	605	600

[1] January to September.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Administration Costs

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the administrative costs were of *(a)* the Sector Skills Development Agency, *(b)* the Learning and Skills Council, *(c)* Investors in People and *(d)* learndirect in the latest year for which figures are available. [21800]

Phil Hope: The latest year for which the figures on administrative costs are available is 2004–05. The figures are subject to the usual confirmation through the external audit of accounts with the exception of the Sector Skills Development Agency and Investors in People UK where the figure is final and derived from their audited accounts.

	2004–05 administrative costs (£000)
Sector Skills Development Agency	5,824
Learning and Skills Council	241,047
Investors in People UK	2,495
Ufi Ltd.[1]	25,213

[1] Ufi Ltd. operates the learndirect/UK online network and services. As part of the efficiency savings being delivered as a result of the Gershon Review each of these bodies is committed to achieving 15 per cent. efficiency savings by 2007–08. In particular the LSC has announced a major transformation programme and as a result estimate savings of up to £40 million by 2007–08.

A-level Examiners

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 334W, on A-level examiners, what qualifications are required in order to become an examiner at A-level; and how many qualified A-level examiners were employed *(a)* in 2005 and *(b)* in each year since 1996. [18857]

Jacqui Smith: A-level examiners are employed by the awarding bodies. The awarding bodies have a duty to fulfil the obligations placed upon them by the exams regulators' code of practice.

The code of practice states that candidates work should be marked by 'suitably experienced and trained' examiners. The code also requires stringent training, sampling and monitoring of markers performance. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is the regulatory body in England responsible for ensuring that awarding bodies fulfil their obligations.

No data are collated by the Department on the number of A-level examiners contracted by the awarding bodies. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Attainment Standards

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of the city academies on standards; and how standards are measured. [22719]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake an independent five-year evaluation of the Academies Programme, reporting finally in September 2007. The Second Annual Report from this evaluation, published in June, demonstrated that academies have made a significant difference to the teaching and learning culture from their predecessors. Provisional GCSE examination results data show a strong performance, with the average academy improving at 5 per cent. per year of opening, five academies improving by over 20 per cent. since opening and an overall improvement rate of at least 6.6 per cent. this year. At key stage 3, the rate of increase in pupils gaining level 5+ between 2004 and 2005 is higher in each subject than schools nationally.

Standards in academies are measured through inspections by Ofsted and by our own education advisers. Ofsted have conducted 13 monitoring visits to academies, finding that five academies were making good progress and most were making at least satisfactory progress. In addition, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, David Bell said in August about standards in academies that

"in some cases, what has been achieved in a short time is nothing less than remarkable."

Basic Qualification

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 19-year-olds in England are without a basic qualification. [22987]

Bill Rammell: From the autumn 2004 Labour Force Survey we estimate that 7.9 per cent. and 142,800 19 to 21-year-olds in England had no qualifications.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what plans she has to implement the Building Schools for the Future programme for *(a)* primary and *(b)* comprehensive schools in Hartlepool constituency; [21657]

(2) what scope there is for sixth form colleges to undertake capital building projects as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme. [21780]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future (BSF) aims to renew all secondary schools of any category in England in the next 15 years. Investment is prioritised on social and educational need, and we have informed Hartlepool of our ambition that it should enter the programme in waves four to six, which should be by 2011 at the latest.

BSF does not support investment in primary schools or sixth form colleges, for which other funding is available. In the March budget, the Chancellor announced additional funding of £150 million for primary schools from 2008–09, rising to £500 million by 2009–10, with the aim that at least half of all primary schools will be renewed in the next 15 years. I aim to announce further details of this programme later this year.

Sixth form colleges are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). From 2006–07, there is a new joint schools and LSC budget for investment in post-16 provision, which will be administered by the LSC. This reaches £180 million by 2007–08, including £100 million from schools capital. The Chancellor's Budget statement also strengthened the government's commitment to the further education sector by announcing new capital funding of £100 million for the sector in 2008–08, rising to £250 million in 2009–10.

CAFCASS

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff have been employed by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in each year since its foundation. [18744]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of current *(a)* public and *(b)* private cases remained unallocated to Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service officers for 10 weeks or longer. [18746]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Child Abuse

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much public funding has been allocated to public education campaigns to prevent child abuse in each year since 1997; [22160]

(2) what plans she has for public education campaigns to prevent child abuse; [22161]

(3) what studies have been commissioned by her Department to assess the effectiveness of public education campaigns to prevent child abuse since 1997. [22162]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills has not engaged in any public education campaigns since taking responsibility for children's safeguards and welfare in 2003. We have no current plans to run any such campaigns. Our principal role is in increasing awareness of child abuse among people who work with children. We work closely on this with the NSPCC, ChildLine and a wide range of other voluntary organisations.

The Government's guidance documents "Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999), What to do if you you're worried a child is being abused", and most recently "Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004" set out the roles and responsibilities of practitioners who work with children, and of a wide range of organisations, to promote children's welfare and safeguard them from harm. The Government plan to publish an updated version of "Working Together" later this year.

The "Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme" aims to put in place a national framework to support the joining up of services so that every child can achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes. As part of this, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) will be established from April 2006 with the objective of co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of key local agencies in their work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Government are proposing in draft regulations and guidance that LSCBs should have a function of communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area and raising awareness of how this can best be done.

Funding support for voluntary organisations has been provided under the Safeguarding Children and Supporting Families grant scheme and from April 2006, this will be available from its successor programme, the Children, Young People and Families Grant Programme. This new funding programme will support the Every Child Matters outcomes for children.

The Government have not commissioned any studies to assess the effectiveness of public education campaigns.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will fund public awareness campaigns aimed at ensuring that all adults are informed about what to do if they are concerned that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. [22626]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills has no current plans to run any public information campaigns. Our principal role is in increasing awareness of child abuse among people who work with children. We work closely on this with the NSPCC, ChildLine and a wide range of other voluntary organisations.

The Government's guidance documents "Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999), What to do if you you're worried a child is being abused", and most recently "Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004" set out the roles and responsibilities of practitioners who work with children, and of a wide range of organisations, to promote

children's welfare and safeguard them from harm. The Government plan to publish an updated version of "Working Together" later this year.

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Funding support for voluntary organisations has been provided under the Safeguarding Children and Supporting Families grant scheme and from April 2006, this will be available from its successor programme, the Children, Young People and Families Grant Programme. This new funding programme will support the Every Child Matters outcomes for children.

Child Care

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been spent on under-three years *(a)* education and *(b)* child care in each of the last 20 years in real terms. [20320]

Beverley Hughes: We are unable to provide figures for years before 1993/94 other than at disproportionate cost. We are also unable to disaggregate spending for children aged under three years old from spending on early years and child care more generally.

The Government have invested over £17 billion on early years and child care services in England since 1997 (including Under 5s Sub Block funding to local authorities which includes support for free early education for 3 and 4-year-olds), as part of an unprecedented expansion of provision for young children and families. Details of Department for Education and Skills (and, for previous years, the Department for Education and Employment) funding on early years and child care since 1993/94 are as shown in the following table:

Overall funding of Sure Start, early years and child care, 1993–94 to 2004–05

	Total expenditure	*Sure Start local programmes and children's centres*	*Child care*	*Under 5s*[1]	*Nursery education*[2]	*Extended schools*[3]	*Nursery education (Under 5s sub block)*
1993–94	3	—	2	1	—	—	—
1994–95	12	—	11	1	—	—	—
1995–96	18	—	17	1	—	—	—
1996–97	30	—	21	9	—	—	—
1997–98	641	—	4	637	—	—	—
1998–99	179	—	134	45	—	—	—
1999–2000	213	7	56	—	150	—	—
2000–01	368	56	65	—	247	n/a	1,300
2001–02	467	134	109	—	224	n/a	1,500
2002–03	680	216	158	—	306	n/a	1,600
2003–04	720	365	340	—	—	15	2,600
2004–05	958	597	330	—	—	31	2,700

[1] £527 million for nursery vouchers was transferred into central Government spending in 1997–98 and returned to local government from 1998–99.
[2] From 2003–04 Nursery education was included in the Standard Spending Assessment, and paid through the Under 5s Sub Block (see far right column)
[3] Extended Schools Funding from the Sure Start ringfenced budgets included in child care to 2004–05, separated in funding plans.

Children's Service Directors

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list local authorities which have not yet appointed a director of children's services. [18992]

Maria Eagle: The Children Act 2004 requires all top tier or unitary local authorities to appoint a Director of Children's Services (DCS).

It is expected that most authorities will have appointed a DCS by 2006 and all by 2008 . So far 126 authorities have reported that they have appointed a DCS, of whom some 20 are designate or interim.

To the best of our knowledge the following authorities have yet to appoint a DCS:

Barking and Dagenham
Bedfordshire
Bradford
Bromley
Coventry
Croydon
Derby
Devon
Durham
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith and Fulham
Havering
Kensington and Chelsea
Kirklees
Leeds
Leicester City
North Lincolnshire
Nottinghamshire
Wakefield
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth
Warwickshire
Windsor and Maidenhead.

Departmental Initiatives

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of her Department's budget has been spent on targeted initiatives such as Respect and Aim Higher in each of the last five years. [21802]

Bill Rammell: The amount of money spent on Aim Higher in each of the last five years is set out in the following table:

Table 1: Aim Higher spending

£ millions

	Amount spent on initiative
2000–01	0
2001–02	50
2002–03	69.5
2003–04	73
2004–05	126

Note:
The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) ran and funded a separate university outreach programme until August 2004, 'Partnerships for Progression'. From August 2004, HEFCE and LSC funding is included in the above figures as the programme merged with Aim Higher.

The budget for Respect has not yet been allocated. For information on other programmes and on overall departmental spending I refer the hon. Member to the departmental annual report (Cm 6522).

Counselling

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on counselling services provided in schools in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland in each year since 1997. [22325]

Jacqui Smith: My Department does not collect this information.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [22279]

Maria Eagle: The Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency lies within Gateshead local authority. The most recent key stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents results information for pupils attending schools in Gateshead, East and Washington, West are given in the following tables:

Key stage 2 results of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above	1997	2004	2005 (Provisional)	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
Gateshead, East and Washington, West—English[1]	59	78	n/a	19
Gateshead, East and Washington, West—Maths[1]	61	77	n/a	16
National Average—English[2]	63	78	79	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	75	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Gateshead East and Washington West constituency.
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] results of 15–year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	2005 (Provisional)	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Gateshead, East and Washington, West—5+A*-C	25.4	51.4	n/a	26.0
Gateshead, East and Washington, West—5+A*-G	76.0	86.2	n/a	10.2
National Average—5+A*-C	45.1	53.7	55.7	8.6
National Average—5+A*-G	87.0	88.8	88.9	1.8

[1] From 2004 results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and key stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local authority and Government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and

Numeracy at age 14, GCSE and equivalent results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In Your Area' website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the rates of employee absence in her Department have been in each year since 1997. [21040]

Maria Eagle: My Department remains committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published report "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector11.

I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the figures contained in the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per staff year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based. The most recent report is for the calendar year 2003 and was announced by Ministerial Statement on 1 November and copies placed in the Libraries of the House. Reports for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are also available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/conditions of service/occupational health/publications/index.asp.

Disability Discrimination

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what monitoring she is undertaking of the progress of universities and colleges in making reasonable adaptations to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. [17585]

Bill Rammell: My Department does not directly monitor the progress of universities and colleges in making reasonable adaptations. Universities are autonomous bodies and it is for them to ensure that they are complying with the Act. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) assists HEIs to meet legislative requirements, spreads good practice and helps institutions to improve access and provision for disabled people. It has distributed project capital funding specifically to help institutions meet their duties under the Act, amounting to £173 million, and all institutions have submitted plans to HEFCE concerning their use of this funding. HEFCE has also provided funding to widen access and improve provision for disabled students in HEIs and directly funded FECs. In 2004–05 over £12 million was distributed.

Performance indicators on the participation of students in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance have been published since 2002. The latest indicators are published on the website of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (http://www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/). The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) also publishes data on participation of disabled students in higher education (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/divers/eostudent.xls).

The Learning and Skills Council monitors the quality of all aspects of provision in further education colleges, including the extent to which college premises are accessible to disabled learners. Since July 2001 the LSC has approved funding to enable colleges to undertake adaptations that will help them comply with the Act. So far over £160 million has been made available. All colleges have made or are making adaptations, or have plans in hand.

Dyslexia

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to providing personal computers for dyslexic students studying at universities in England in each year since 1999. [20759]

Bill Rammell: The HE sector has received significant levels of capital funding for learning, teaching and IT since 1998–99. Within this there has been some explicit funding for students with special needs; most of this is used for modifying buildings to meet disability legislation requirements, but some will have been used for equipment, including computers for dyslexic students.

It is a matter for the institutions to determine the best use of such funding.

Education (Kingston and Surbiton)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the working age population in Kingston and Surbiton constituency hold a qualification *(a)* at degree level and *(b)* above degree level. [22225]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows analysis of the qualification levels of the working age population in the parliamentary constituency of Kingston and Surbiton at *(a)* degree level (level 4) and *(b)* above degree level (level 5). This is presented alongside data for England for comparison. Data comes from the Local Labour Force Survey for 2004–05.

Percentage

Qualification level	*Kingston and Surbiton*	*England*
Above degree level (level 5)	10.0	5.3
Degree level (level 4)	27.5	20.8

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils attend each *(a)* primary school, *(b)* secondary school and *(c)* special needs school in Kingston and Surbiton constituency. [22227]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1]: Number of pupils[2] as at January 2005—Kingston and Surbiton Parliamentary Constituency

URN	LEA number	DfES number	Establishment name	School type	Number of pupils: Headcount	Number of pupils: Full-time equivalent
102563	314	2000	Buckland Infant and Nursery School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	345	290.0
102564	314	2001	Burlington Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	368	368.0
102565	314	2002	Burlington Infant and Nursery School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	366	298.5
102566	314	2003	Moor Lane Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	316	316.0
102568	314	2005	Ellingham Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	231	218.5
102570	314	2012	Knollmead Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	257	232.0
102574	314	2024	Tolworth Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	335	335.0
102575	314	2025	Tolworth Infant School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	297	271.0
102577	314	2030	Maple Infants School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	230	197.5
102579	314	2032	King Athelstan Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	214	199.5
102580	314	2033	Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	468	442.0
102581	314	2034	Maiden Manor Primary and Nursery School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	413	389.0
102582	314	2035	The Mount Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	461	428.5
102583	314	2036	Lovelace Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	425	400.0
102586	314	3302	Christ Church CofE Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	391	391.0
102587	314	3303	Maiden Parochial CofE Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	239	226.0
102588	314	3304	St. Andrew's and St. Mark's CofE Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	226	226.0
102589	314	3305	St. John's CofE Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	247	220.0
102590	314	3308	St. Paul's CofE Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	214	214.0
102592	314	3310	St. Matthew's CofE Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	272	270.0
102593	314	3311	St. Mary's CofE Aided Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	234	215.0
102595	314	3501	Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	464	464.0
102596	314	3502	St. Joseph's RC Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	202	184.0
102599	314	4006	Chessington Community College	Modern School	752	748.0
102600	314	5404	The Hollyfield School and Centre for Continuing Education	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,032	1,032.0
102601	314	4009	Southborough School	Modern School	780	780.0
102603	314	4011	Tolworth Girls' School and Centre for Continuing Education	Modern School	1,396	1,396.0
102605	314	5400	Tiffin School	Grammar School	1,064	1,064.0
102606	314	5401	Richard Challoner School	Modern School	803	803.0
102607	314	5402	The Holy Cross School	Other Secondary School	898	898.0
102608	314	5403	Beverley School	Modern School	512	512.0
102621	314	5950	Bedelsford School	Special (Maintained Day)	55	52.5
102622	314	7001	St. Philip's School	Special (Maintained Day)	112	112.0
102623	314	7002	Dysart School	Special (Maintained Day)	63	63.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Education (Braintree)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils attend each *(a)* primary school, *(b)* secondary school and *(c)* special needs school in Braintree constituency. [21804]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is shown in the following table.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1]: number of pupils[2] As at January 2005: Braintree parliamentary constituency

URN	LEA number	DfES number	Establishment name	School type	Number of pupils: Headcount	Number of pupils: Full-time equivalent
114727	881	2036	Gosfield Community Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	145	141.5
114794	881	2134	Beckers Green Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	284	281.0
114809	881	2250	Bocking Church Street Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	188	188.0
114818	881	2300	John Bunyan Infant School and Nursery	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	211	185.0
114827	881	2330	Chipping Hill Infant School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	103	99.5
114828	881	2350	Silver End Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	271	271.0
114829	881	2360	Templars Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	287	287.0
114832	881	2370	Cressing Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	131	131.0
114835	881	2380	Great Bardfield Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	151	151.0

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1]: number of pupils[2]
As at January 2005: Braintree parliamentary constituency

URN	LEA number	DfES number	Establishment name	School type	Number of pupils: Headcount	Number of pupils: Full-time equivalent
114842	881	2410	Rayne Primary and Nursery School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	297	280.5
114844	881	2420	Shalford Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	80	80.0
114941	881	2669	John Ray Infant School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	275	259.0
114944	881	2679	Powers Hall Infant School Designated Nursery and Speech and Language Unit	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	229	197.5
114951	881	5276	The Howbridge Infant School, Witham	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	234	223.0
114957	881	2699	Powers Hall Junior School and Speech and Language Unit	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	315	315.0
114974	881	2737	Hatfield Peverel Infant School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	176	176.0
114983	881	2757	Elm Hall Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	90	90.0
114984	881	2759	Great Bradfords Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	401	401.0
114988	881	2767	White Court Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	560	546.5
114989	881	2769	Great Bradfords Infant and Nursery School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	327	273.5
115007	881	2810	John Bunyan Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	260	260.0
115028	881	2880	John Ray Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	346	346.0
115036	881	2900	Templars Infant and Nursery School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	165	144.0
115102	881	5279	Hatfield Peverel St. Andrew's Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	238	238.0
115104	881	3204	Howbridge C of E (V.C.) Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	324	324.0
115105	881	3205	Rivenhall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	102	102.0
115106	881	3207	Feering Church of England Controlled Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	162	162.0
115107	881	3208	Finchingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	65	65.0
115108	881	3209	St. Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Coggeshall	Infant and Junior School 5–11	262	262.0
115109	881	3211	Kelvedon St. Mary's Church of England Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	388	388.0
115110	881	3212	Wethersfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	66	66.0
115111	881	3213	White Notley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	100	97.5
115157	881	3440	St. Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	403	395.5
115162	881	3460	Stisted Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	103	103.0
115166	881	3470	Terling Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	93	93.0
115194	881	3790	St. Francis Catholic Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	196	196.0
115199	881	3813	Holy Family Catholic Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	204	203.5
115221	881	4350	Alec Hunter High School	Comprehensive all-through 11–16	835	835.0
115226	881	4400	The Honywood Community School	Comprehensive all-through 11–16	910	910.0
115227	881	4420	Notley High School	Comprehensive all-through 11–16	1,253	1,253.0
115231	881	4470	Tabor High School	Comprehensive all-through 11–16	1,049	1,049.0
115312	881	5272	Earls Colne Primary School and Nursery	Infant and Junior School 5–11	368	368.0
115328	881	5412	The Rickstones School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	781	781.0
115367	881	5451	The John Bramston School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,152	1,152.0
115446	881	7013	Southview School	Special (Maintained Day)	45	45.0
115464	881	7048	The Edith Borthwick School	Special (Maintained Day)	158	158.0
131207	881	2080	Lyons Hall Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	504	504.0
132020	881	2090	Notley Green Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	342	330.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Education Maintenance Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what is the predicted budget for education maintenance allowance payments in 2005–06 is; and what proportion of post-16 students are in receipt of this allowance. [22496]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The current budget for education maintenance allowance (EMA) payments in the financial year 2005–06 is £403 million. However EMA is a demand-led programme which is funded through Annually Managed Expenditure by HM Treasury so final provision may be different.

For the academic year 2005/06, we estimate around 55 per cent. of students will be eligible for EMA on income grounds. We estimate this to be some 465,000 young people. This includes unwaged trainees on work-based learning programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). From April 2006, unwaged trainees, and their parents/carers, will receive the same

package of financial support as is currently available to those who stay on in full-time education, i.e. EMA, child benefit, child tax credit and other related benefits.

So far, the national EMA scheme has been rolled out to 16 and 17-year-olds. However, in pilot areas EMA is also available to those aged 18. The national scheme will be rolled out to 18-year-olds in September 2006. Unwaged trainees aged 16–19 will be eligible from April 2006.

Further Education

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Department has to change the level of funding allocated to further education in *(a)* Coventry and *(b)* England. [19972]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* On 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published 'Priorities for Success'—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult work force. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between Government, employers and learners to achieve this.

The Chancellor announced in the 2004 Spending Review settlement for education and skills in April 2004, that there will be over £1 billion of additional investment in the learning and skills sector by 2007–08. We will not know what this will mean for regional and local budgets until allocations are made by the National LSC Office, following receipt of the grant letter from my Department.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding will be allocated to the learner support funds in further education in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; and if she will make a statement. [20720]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) through an annual Grant Letter that sets out the LSC's key priorities. The operational delivery of individual programmes, taking account of these priorities and the funding made available by the Department, is a matter for the LSC.

The table details the LSC's allocations for learner support funding in 2005–06, and the amount the Department will make available to the LSC for learner support funding in 2006–07. All amounts are rounded to the nearest £1 million, and totals exclude expected receipts on the CDL programme.

£ million

Name of programme	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
The Learner Support Fund[1]	122	125
Care 2 Learn	23	23
Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)[2]	403	511
Dance and Drama Awards	14	14
Adult Learning Grant	14	19
Career Development Loans (CDLs)[3]	20	19
Total	596	711

[1] The Learner Support Fund provides support with hardship funds (e.g. for books or equipment), transport funds, residential bursaries (to support students who need to live away from home), and support with child care costs for those aged 19 and over.

[2] EMA is an incentive payment that encourages school leavers to stay on in non advanced full-time education. It is not intended to support the living costs of young people and/or their parents or carers. EMA is funded through HM Treasury's Annual Managed Expenditure (AME), whereas the rest of learner support funding is within the DfES Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL).

[3] Distribution of resources for CDLs reflects planned expenditure on development work signalled in the first Skills Strategy White Paper.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who attended secondary school in the last 10 years in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering, *(c)* Essex and *(d)* Greater London (i) completed and (ii) did not complete a university degree. [20756]

Bill Rammell: This information is not held centrally. The Higher Education Funding Council for England have published figures showing the proportion of young people in each local area who go on to higher education, available at www.hefce.ac.uk. but this does not indicate whether or not they obtained a degree. Figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency for 2002/03 show that 78.1 per cent. of UK domiciled full-time first degree students at English higher education institutions were expected to gain a degree, 1.7 per cent. to gain a higher education qualification other than a degree, 6.1 per cent. were expected to transfer to another institution, and 13.9 per cent. were expected to neither obtain a qualification nor transfer.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who attended secondary school in the last 10 years in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering, *(c)* Essex and *(d)* Greater London (i) sat and (ii) did not sit A-levels. [20757]

Jacqui Smith: The number of 16 to 18-year-old A-Level candidates[1] (1996–2005) in maintained schools and colleges[2] has been provided in the following table.

[1] 16 to 18-year-old students who took at least one GCE/VCE A-Level or VCE Double Award in the year in question. Ages are taken at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August.

[2] Regional figures are provided for the maintained sector only (LA maintained schools, CTCs and FE sector colleges).

	Romford	*Havering*	*Essex*	*Greater London*
1996	634	1,138	6,213	22,887
1997	676	1,234	6,691	24,497
1998	867	1,441	7,957	29,488
1999	844	1,443	8,133	29,913
2000	789	1,435	8,138	30,783
2001	769	1,400	8,058	30,355
2002	665	1,260	8,114	30,529

	Romford	Havering	Essex	Greater London
2003	785	1,548	8,323	31,817
2004	819	1,419	7,975	32,473
2005	789	1,509	7,925	34,878

The number of 16 to 18-year-old students who did not take A-Levels is not available.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who attended secondary school in the last 10 years in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering, *(c)* Essex and *(d)* Greater London (i) completed and (ii) did not complete any form of education higher than GCSE level. [20800]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not available in the exact format requested. In February 2005 a Statistical First Release (SFR) on attainment by age 19 was published. For the first time, that SFR used matched administrative data. So, data are only available for one year, 2004. Local Learning and Skills Council area is the lowest available geography.

The table shows the number of people aged 19 in 2004 who had attained level 3 in the particular location. Of course, they may have been in secondary school in a different location. For that reason, estimating those who do not have a level 3 qualification is difficult. For illustration, the table includes the number of pupils who were aged 14 in 1999–2000—and would therefore be 19 in 2004.

Local LSC	Aged 19 in 2004 attained level 3	Population aged 14 in 1999–2000—therefore 19 in 2004
Essex	8,300	19,100
London North	5,900	12,400
London West	7,200	15,800
London Central	5,500	12,600
London East	8,000	23,800
London South	8,400	15,500

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the time remaining for preparation between each further education college in West Yorkshire being informed of its funding allocation for 2005/06 and the beginning of the 2005/06 academic year. [22544]

Bill Rammell: Further Education allocations to colleges are an important part of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) business cycle. This process starts with my Department's annual grant letter to the LSC in November which enables the LSC to plan regional priorities and budgets. Local LSCs begin their planning dialogue with colleges and providers in December and in January colleges are provided with indicative (provisional) allocations for the following funding year beginning 1 August. Local, regional and national plans have to be reconciled and the LSC expect to sign off individual college plans in April. Final allocations for colleges are then confirmed in May. This timetable was followed for the 2005/06 funding year.

My Department has already agreed with the LSC our funding priorities for 2006/07 and colleges have been advised of these through a letter from me and through the LSC's 'Priorities for Success' document which was published on 21 October. This also confirms the allocations timetable for next year. I expect this earlier notification of funding priorities and the dialogue between colleges and the LSC which can now begin will lead to less uncertainty in the period up to confirmation of college allocations for 2006/07 in May 2006.

I am satisfied that the LSC's management of this complex process is a proper balance between their obligation to meet the Government's priorities and ensuring colleges can effectively deploy public resources.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21290]

Bill Rammell: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual report. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance report and at an aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21307]

Bill Rammell: The Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the department's efficiency programme.

Government Veterinary Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that there are sufficient trained vets to staff the Government Veterinary Service. [19217]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

The State Veterinary Service's resources and work demands are reviewed regularly.

The number of vets employed by the State Veterinary Service will vary from time to time. The State Veterinary Service also engages Local Veterinary Inspectors and Temporary Veterinary Inspectors to act on its behalf as required.

In the event of a very large outbreak of exotic disease, Defra would rapidly ramp up veterinary resource as detailed in paragraphs 3.73–3.76 of the Exotic Disease generic Contingency Plan. The first call would be on vets within other Government Departments and agencies such as the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

Additional resource is available through the contingency local veterinary inspector arrangements. A scheme intended to provide about 100 private vets to support the 24 SVS Animal Health Divisional offices across England, Scotland and Wales is being introduced. They will be trained in emergency roles and procedures

and can be called upon immediately to work in the local offices, providing veterinary advice in the event of an outbreak of exotic disease.

The Department also has the ability, through the International Animal Health Emergency Reserve arrangements, to call on vets and other technical experts from other signatory countries—Ireland, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia.

Grandparents (Child Care Arrangements)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which Sure Start programmes are aimed directly at grandparents who are raising grandchildren full-time. [20262]

Beverley Hughes: We do not hold specific information on Sure Start activities aimed directly at grandparents who are raising grandchildren full-time. Sure Start programmes are inclusive to all parents and carers of young children. We know that grandparents in Sure Start catchment areas are accessing a range of services and activities through these early years settings. Many grandparents also volunteer to have an active role in the delivery of services and the management of their local Sure Start programme; for example by participating in local partnership boards and parent/carer forums.

Higher Education Colleges

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will guarantee that the prioritisation of education for 16 to 19-year-olds will not affect *(a)* fee concessions and *(b)* service levels for those aged 60 who wish to study at higher education colleges in Essex. [21383]

Bill Rammell: I announced on 21 October our priorities for further education (FE) funding for the coming two years. These apply to FE colleges and other providers including higher education institutions delivering FE. The priorities will enable more 14 to 19-year-olds to stay on in education or training and improve their results, and will enable more adults of all ages without basic skills and qualifications to train to join the work force. The funding changes do not affect the existing arrangements whereby my Department funds free tuition, on publicly funded courses, for all older learners on income based benefits such as income support, housing and council tax benefits and those receiving the pension (guarantee) credit. I expect a wide range of adult learning to continue to be available and we will maintain funding for Personal and Community Development Learning with £210 million set aside from 2006/07.

My Department does not set the detail of provision at local level. Working with the Learning and Skills Council, FE colleges as independent bodies retain discretion to decide on additional fee concessions and within the resources provided and agreed priorities will deliver provision to best meet the needs of local communities.

Information-sharing Protocols

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list local authorities which have final information-sharing protocols in place for dealing with children. [18993]

Beverley Hughes: The Green Paper "Every Child Matters", published in September 2003, required local authorities to meet nine minimum requirements in relation to information sharing. These included putting in place information sharing protocols, covering health, education and social care; and to have them in development with other agencies providing services to children and young people by March 2004. All 150 top-tier local authorities were provided with funding in the financial year 2003–04 to meet these requirements.

Independent research by Royal Holloway, University of London, reported that by March 2004, 87 (65 per cent.) authorities had met the requirement. 29 (22 per cent.) of authorities were assessed as being 'well ahead' because they had protocols that were signed by health, education, social care and other agencies. 43 (32 per cent.) authorities were assessed as being a 'bit behind' when protocols had yet to be agreed at a high level.

Acknowledging the challenge in meeting the requirements to the original deadline, we allowed local authorities to carry over unspent funds into the financial year 2004–05. We commissioned Royal Holloway to do a further check on authorities in July 2004, which indicated that significant progress had been made. At this point, less than 10 per cent. were identified as 'a bit behind'.

We have not made any subsequent detailed checks on authorities about whether they have met the requirements and have no plans to do so. We continue to encourage local authorities to develop effective information sharing arrangements and, partly in response to calls from local authorities, we plan to provide them with non-statutory guidance on information sharing across all children's services early in the new year.

Intelligent Design

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in England teach a course in which intelligent design forms a unit. [22201]

Jacqui Smith: Intelligent design does not form part of any programme of study in the national curriculum. In science pupils should be taught at Key Stage 4 "how scientific controversies can arise from different ways of interpreting empirical evidence [for example, Darwin's theory of evolution]". Although it is possible that intelligent design could be raised in this context, controversies need to be scientific in order to meet national curriculum requirements.

Intelligent design may be taught in religious education lessons as a religious interpretation of how the world was created. All religious education syllabuses are devised by local authorities, so statistics are not held centrally.

Key Stage Tests

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of secondary schools teach food technology at Key Stage 3. [17951]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect this information centrally. However, each year the Design and Technology Association publishes an annual survey of schools. The results for 2004–05 suggest that 90 per cent. of schools offer food technology at Key Stage 3.

National Care Leavers Week

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action her Department *(a)* carried out and *(b)* sponsored to mark National Care Leavers Week; and if she will consider ways to involve hon. Members in future years. [22618]

Maria Eagle: I am grateful for the opportunity provided by National Care Leavers Week to confirm my Department's commitment to continue to improve outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. I have sent a message giving my support to the reception to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Children (Leaving Care) Act, which took place on the 27 October, as part of the week's events.

National Care Leavers' Week is an annual awareness campaign run and supported by a coalition of charities and I am sure that the organisers would welcome the opportunity to involve hon. Members in future years.

Part-Time Students

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps her Department is taking to encourage greater numbers of part-time students; [22690]

(2) if she will make a statement on financial support for part-time students. [22691]

Bill Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne) on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 478–79W.

School Absence

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the latest figures for authorised and unauthorised absence for *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools showing the number of children absent for at least one half day session and the proportion of children of school age in that constituency who have been absent for at least one half day session are, broken down by constituency. [18202]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

School Admissions

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure that appeals on school admissions are dealt with in an efficient and timely manner; [22187]

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure that appeals on school admissions are dealt with efficiently and quickly. [22706]

Jacqui Smith: The School Admission Appeals Code of Practice advises that appeal hearings should be held within a reasonable time—normally within 30 school days of an appeal being made or, for appeals made during the normal admissions round, within 30 school days of the specified closing date for the receipt of appeals. All admission authorities must have regard to this advice.

School Construction

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the three-year role for the rolling accumulation of capital funds for new build projects for schools. [22224]

Jacqui Smith: All maintained schools in England receive an annual allocation of devolved formula capital to invest in their local priorities. By 2008–09, a typical secondary school will receive £113,000 a year and a typical primary school £34,000. Schools may have investment needs such as larger building projects that cannot be fully supported with a single year's allocation and therefore, so that schools can build up funding for them, our guidance includes that this money can be rolled-over for up to three years. Also, where there is local agreement with their authorities, schools may be able to draw down future years' allocations so that they get early benefit of the investment.

School Places (Appeals)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parental appeals were made against the allocation of school places in Braintree constituency in each year since 1997; and how many were upheld. [21806]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not available for all schools in Braintree constituency because admission appeals data for community and voluntary controlled schools are provided at local authority level. The available information for Essex local authority is given in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: appeals by parents against non-admission of their children
Each academic year: 1997/98 to 2003/04: Essex local authority

Maintained primary

	Number of appeals lodged	Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
		Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
1997/98	352	292	83.0	143	49.0
1998/99	305	257	84.3	76	29.6
1999/2000	318	192	60.4	45	23.4
2000/01	563	342	58.7	132	38.6
2001/02	697	423	60.7	161	38.1
2002/03	828	498	60.1	199	40.0
2003/04	653	402	61.6	131	32.6

	Maintained secondary				
	Number of appeals lodged	Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
		Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
1997/98	477	335	70.2	88	26.3
1998/99	592	429	72.5	124	28.9
1999/2000	717	541	75.5	172	31.8
2000/01	979	760	77.6	294	38.7
2001/02	1,339	952	71.1	261	27.4
2002/03	1,599	1,034	64.7	298	28.8
2003/04	1,553	1,072	69.0	342	31.9

[1] Number of appeals heard by a committee expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals lodged by parents.
[2] Number of appeals decided in parents' favour expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals heard by a committee.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census and Admission Appeals Survey

School Playing Fields

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many state school playing fields have been sold since 1997. [21060]

Jacqui Smith: Prior to October 1998, there was no regulation of the sale of school playing fields at local authority controlled schools. If a local authority wanted to sell a school playing field there was nothing to stop it and it could spend the proceeds as it wished.

Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 was introduced in October 1998 to stop the indiscriminate sale of school playing fields. Local authorities and governing bodies of all maintained schools now need the Secretary of State's consent before they can dispose of a playing field or any part of a playing field. Section 77 defines playing field as land in the open air which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation.

All applications received since 16 July 2001 have been scrutinised by the independent School Playing Fields Advisory Panel, which comprises representatives from the National Playing Fields Association, the Central Council of Physical Recreation, Learning through Landscapes, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Local Government Association. The panel provides advice on the extent to which applications meet the published criteria.

Since 1997, 166 applications to sell an area of school playing field capable of being used for at least a small sports pitch have been approved. Of these approvals, 70 have been at closed school sites. Of the 96 disposals at operating schools, the proceeds of sale have been used to improve on-site sports facilities at 69 of these schools. In the other 27 cases the sale proceeds have been used to improve educational facilities.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the closure of special schools on overall provision of special education. [19817]

Maria Eagle: A targeted review of the role of special schools was carried out in 2003 which resulted in the Report of the Special Schools Working Group: the majority of the report's recommendations were subsequently embodied in the Department's SEN Strategy—"Removing Barriers to Achievement". We believe special schools have an important role to play within the overall spectrum of provision for children with SEN—both through direct provision and through sharing their expertise with mainstream schools.

Under the Education Act 1996, local authorities are under a duty to secure sufficient schools for pupils in their area and in doing so must have particular regard to the need to secure special educational provision. Ofsted inspects the quality of educational provision for children with SEN, including specialist provision. Within this framework how provision is organised is a matter for local decision, and for that reason, Government plays no role in relation to local authority school reorganisations or in respect of decisions to close schools.

Student Finance

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial support is available for a graduate who has completed an undergraduate degree and wishes to undertake a second undergraduate degree as a foundation to a professional qualification. [18154]

Bill Rammell: Graduate students who wish to undertake a second undergraduate degree leading to a professional qualification, for example in medicine, veterinary medicine, architecture or a similar field can apply for a maintenance loan.

From September 2006 we will be introducing revised rules for determining what support should be available to students who have previously undertaken higher education courses. These new provisions will not alter the treatment of graduate students undertaking a second undergraduate degree leading to a professional qualification. As is the case under current rules, such students will not be eligible for fee support, or for the new grants that we have introduced. However, they will continue to qualify for the maintenance loan.

Graduates undertaking a four year accelerated medical or dental course are eligible for bursary support from the NHS from the second year of the course, and the NHS also pays the fees from the second year onwards. Where bursary support is available students will qualify for a reduced rate loan.

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the decision was taken to set the cut-off date for those exempt from paying university tuition fees at 1 August. [19699]

Bill Rammell: There is no such cut off date or exemption from paying university tuition fees.

However it is the case that under section 25 of the Higher Education Act 2004, students that have received an offer before 1 August 2005 for entry to a course that starts before 1 September 2007 may not be charged more in tuition fees than the basic amount, which is set at £1,200 for the 2006/07 academic year.

The 1 August date was put into the Higher Education Act by an amendment carried in the House of Lords on 8 June 2004, proposed by the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total value of outstanding student loans at the end of 2004–05 was in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gravesham. [19815]

Bill Rammell: Provisional data from the Student Loans Company show the student loan amount outstanding (including loans not yet due for repayment) for publicly-owned debt in England at the end of financial year 2004–05 was £13,023.1 million. Data are not available at constituency level.

Data at a UK level are published annually in a Statistical First Release, the latest in the series being SLC SFR 02/2005 which is available at http://www.slc.co.uk/noframe/corpinfo/natstat.html.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provisions are made for British citizens taken to live abroad as children who want to return to study at universities in England and receive student loans. [19820]

Bill Rammell: From 2006/07 all EU nationals, and this includes British nationals living abroad, will be entitled to tuition fee loans provided they have resided in the European Economic Area or Switzerland throughout the three years immediately preceding the start of the academic year in which their course commences. However, these students are not entitled to loans for living costs.

Apart from closely defined exceptions, to be eligible for student loans for living costs in addition to student loans for fees (from 2006/07), a British national must have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) throughout the three years immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course and ordinarily resident in England on this date. A British national whose residence in the UK and Islands during the three year period was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full time education is not considered to have satisfied the ordinary residence requirement—unless they have exercised a right of free movement within the European Economic Area and were ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area (including the UK) immediately prior to the three year period.

An exception is made where the three year residence requirement cannot be satisfied because the applicant or their parents have been temporarily employed or absent abroad. This provides flexibility where British nationals are not able to meet the residence requirements but have not made a long term decision to live outside the country.

British nationals may indeed meet the temporary absence provisions, dependent upon their individual circumstances and they and their families would then be eligible for the full range of student support, including, student loans for fees and maintenance. The term temporary is not defined in regulations. A statutory definition of the term could not reflect the range of circumstances under which students and their families may find themselves temporarily abroad. We believe the fairest approach is to allow local authorities to judge each case on its individual merits.

A very specific exemption from the three year residence requirement applies to armed forces personnel and their families serving abroad as a result of their special situation because they are bound by military law to accept overseas postings.

Background

The criterion of residence, rather than nationality, has been the principle of successive governments since it was introduced in the 1960's. We believe this remains a fair requirement which clearly demonstrates a substantial residential connection with the UK and recognises an economic contribution to the country. If a person lives abroad on a long term basis, it is not reasonable they should expect support for higher education, through subsidised loans, from public funds in the same way as students who reside in this country.

There are also a number of other carefully defined exceptions where a student may receive support without satisfying the normal residence requirement. In order to comply with European Union legislation, designed to ensure the free movement of workers throughout the European Economic Area, UK nationals, their spouses, civil partner, children and stepchildren, who have been working elsewhere in the European Economic Area or Switzerland and have returned to take up employment in the UK are generally eligible for support as is they had not left the UK. In order to benefit from this provision they must have been ordinarily resident in the European Economic Area or Switzerland throughout the three years immediately preceding the start of their course.

The vast majority of British nationals who choose to live and work abroad do so at their own volition. Where this is short-term the temporary absence provisions will meet their needs and they will be eligible for student support.

It would be not be right to open up the student loan scheme to expatriates and other British passport holders who have lived and been educated in other parts of the world and have few connections with the UK.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* original intended and *(b)* actual (i) launch date and (ii) cost was of the Student Finance Direct website; who the principal contractors involved were; what payments were made to each one; what the (A) usage targets for and (B) actual usage of the website were in the first year of its operation; and how much was spent on promoting the website to students and future students. [20191]

Bill Rammell: The Student Finance Direct website was launched by the Student Loans Company in January 2003. The cost of the website alone cannot be given since it is an integral part of a much larger IT project. No specific targets were set for the use of the website, but it receives an estimated 1.5 million visits annually. Students and their sponsors can use the website to make on-line applications for student loans. No special activities were undertaken to promote the website or the on-line system, but references were included in our usual student finance promotional material. It is not possible to separate out the costs associated with adding these references but these would have been small.

Sure Start

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to extend the Sure Start programme. [21858]

Beverley Hughes: The Government intends to develop 3,500 Sure Start Children Centres by 2010, one for every community.

There are currently around 400 designated children centres, most developed from existing provision such as Sure Start Local Programmes and Early Excellence Centres. £435 million has been made available to local authorities in 2004–06 to develop centres in disadvantaged areas. From March 2006, £947 million will be available for local authorities to create 2,500 children's centres by March 2008.

Trust Schools

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the proposed trust schools will be funded, with particular reference to schools governed by parent groups. [22728]

Jacqui Smith: Trust schools will be funded on exactly the same basis as other maintained schools. They will receive multi-year revenue budgets from their local authority under the new school funding arrangements we are introducing from April 2006. They will receive direct capital funding on the national formula and have access to the substantial funding allocated to their authority and through the Building Schools for the Future programme.

University Graduates

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students starting a degree course graduated in each academic year since 1997. [19197]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures for the percentage of full-time first degree students expected to gain a degree are shown in the following table. For 2002/03, 78.1 per cent. of UK domiciled full-time first degree students at English higher education institutions were expected to gain a degree, 1.7 per cent. to gain a higher education qualification other than a degree, 6.1 per cent. were expected to transfer to another institution, and 13.9 per cent. were expected to neither obtain a qualification nor transfer.

Percentage of UK domiciled full-time first degree students at English higher education institutions expected to gain a degree

Students starting courses in:	*Percentage of students who were projected to gain a degree*[1]
1997	76.9
1998	77.4
1999	77.4
2000	78.1
2001	78.4
2002	78.1

[1] For 2002/03, the projected outcomes summarise the pattern of movements of students at institutions between 2002/03 and 2003/04 and give the outcomes that would have been expected from starters in 2002/03 if progression patterns were to remain unchanged over the next few years.
Source:
"Performance Indicators in Higher Education", published by HESA.

Youth Services

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was available for youth services in *(a)* Wimbledon constituency, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [22384]

Phil Hope: Youth services are funded through the local authority and information about the level of funding is collected by local education authority (LEA) area. This information has only been available separately since 2000. Therefore I am in a position to give funding levels for the youth service in England as a whole, and for the youth service within London, and Wimbledon by LEA area, in this case Merton, from that date.

Figures in the following table give local authorities annual budget for youth service. Planned budgeted expenditure on the youth service as reported to the Department by local authorities has increased by almost 12 per cent. between 2003/04 and 2005/06.

Youth service funding levels are as follows:

£

Financial year	*England*	*London*	*Wimbledon (Merton) LEA*
2000–01	288,026,510	57,239,674	552,277
2001–02	306,761,605	60,662,048	575,729
2002–03	316,288,138	65,838,535	605,730
2003–04	343,364,777	67,393,083	806,830
2004–05	363,095,777	65,839,152	809,020
2005–06	383,662,949	69,415,404	847,028

HEALTH

"Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" Consultation

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many voluntary organisations made submissions following their own consultation on the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say process; [18475]

(2) how many local authorities have made submissions based on their own public consultations on the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say process *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Thames Valley. [18533]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested will be available when the consultation period has ended.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the White Paper following the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say process to be published. [18476]

Mr. Byrne: We expect to publish the White Paper following Your Health, Your Care, Your Say process around the turn of the year.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether consultations already undertaken by primary care trusts will be taken into account in the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say White Paper. [18479]

Mr. Byrne: The Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation is a national listening exercise focused on what people want from community health and social care nationally. It is not meant to circumvent local consultations that have already taken place.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to whom hard copies of the questionnaire on Your Health, Your Care, Your Say will be circulated. [18494]

Mr. Byrne: Over 10,000 hard copies of the questionnaire have been sent to health and social care organisations, and members of the public, who have requested copies. We have taken particular care about providing materials in a range of languages and formats, including braille, audio, large print and easy read.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what public meetings she has planned to participate in personally as part of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise. [18820]

Mr. Byrne: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, attended the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" regional consultation event in Leicester on 22 September and a meeting organised by her constituency office on 7 October. My noble Friend the Minister of State (Lord Warner), was present at a regional event in London on 29 September and I attended the regional event in Gateshead on 14 September.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, together with my noble Friend the Minister of State (Lord Warner), my right hon. Friend the Minister of State (Jane Kennedy), my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Public Health (Caroline Flint) and I plan to attend the national "citizens' summit" in Birmingham on 29 October 2005.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what questions are being asked by the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise. [18821]

Mr. Byrne: The questions are set out in the reports from the Gateshead, Leicester, London and Plymouth consultation events, copies of which are available in the Library.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* general practitioners, *(b)* voluntary organisations, *(c)* community hospital managers and *(d)* public and patient involvement forums took part in "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" regional consultations in (i) England and (ii) Thames Valley. [17530]

Mr. Byrne: The "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" regional consultation events are primarily for the public. 21 of the 251 people who attended the events in Gateshead, Leicester, London and Plymouth indicated that they worked in health or social care. Figures for the national summit in Birmingham on 29 October and events in the Thames Valley area are not available. National health service and social care organisations, including national staff representative bodies and the voluntary sector, are involved in drawing up policy recommendations through five taskforces, which are taking on board the views expressed by the public at the consultation events and in an on-line questionnaire. We have also written to national staff representative bodies, encouraging them to work with staff to discuss the issues and to feedback to the Department.

Agenda for Change

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many appeals against Agenda for Change bandings in the NHS there have been in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority, *(c)* each NHS trust and *(d)* each primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [18903]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally but will be held by individual national health service employers.

Allergies

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what specialist allergy treatment is provided by Lancashire NHS Teaching Trust; and if she will make a statement. [21895]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* This is a matter for the chair of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Mr. Dennis Benson informing him of your inquiry.

Alzheimer's (Drugs)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the progress the National Service Framework for Older People is making in ensuring people with Alzheimer's have effective treatment and support. [18885]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The national service framework (NSF) for older people considered the range of services and support needed for older people with dementia. However, despite the significant achievements of the NSF for mental health and older people, there was agreement that there were particular challenges in delivering better mental health services for older adults.

As a result, in June 2005 the Department published "Securing Better Mental Health for Older Adults" to mark the start of a new programme bringing together mental health and older people's policy to improve services for older people with mental health needs. In early November this year, the Department will also launch a web-based service development guide for older people's mental health, the next step in improving mental health and care services for older people. The service development guide builds on the service models outlined in the NSF for older people and the principles promoted in "Securing Better Mental Health for Older Adults".

Ambulance Trusts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS ambulance trusts she intends to have operating in England in April 2006. [18069]

Mr. Byrne: A public consultation, led by strategic health authorities will be held on the future organisation of ambulance trusts. The Department is minded to propose that there are 11 trusts, but a final decision will not be taken until we have properly consulted local interests, patients and the public.

Breast Cancer

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money her Department has spent on researching the causes of breast cancer in each of the last seven years. [18010]

Alan Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

My Department supports medical and clinical research through the Medical Research Council (MRC). MRC spend on research relevant to breast cancer, which includes the cause of the disease, the disease itself and developing treatments, over the past seven years was as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	3.9
1998–99	4.3
1999–2000	4.4
2000–01	6.8
2001–02	6.0
2002–03	5.1
2003–04	4.9

It is important however to note that a variety of other research funded by the MRC has also informed the understanding and treatment of breast cancer.

Care Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1662W, concerning care homes, for what reason the figures for later years are not comparable with earlier years. [18809]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's and the Commission for Social Care Inspection's (CSCI) data are not comparable for the following reasons.

Due to a delay in registering local authority (LA) care homes by the National Care Standards Commission, the CSCI data excludes some LA homes, which were open but not registered. All local authority homes were registered by 31 March 2004.

A change in definition between the two datasets. The Department's data up to 2001 was based on the number of care homes open as at 31 March, whereas the CSCI data is based on the number of care homes registered as at 31 March.

The Department used to collect care home data from LA so were able to provide data by LA boundary, whereas CSCI data is collected as part of the registration process and is based on CSCI regions. CSCI have recently carried out a mapping process of care homes to LA boundaries using postcodes.

Care Management Assessments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has issued guidance on the maximum permissible time between referral and a care management assessment by a social services Department; and what the average time taken between referral and a care management assessment was in each local authority in England in the last period for which figures are available. [18354]

Mr. Byrne: In "Improvement, Expansion and Reform: the next 3 years", the Department sets out what organisations need to do over the period 2003–06. It identified national priorities and targets which health and social care organisations need to build into their local plans. One of the targets was that, by December 2004, all assessments of older people should begin within 48 hours of first contact with social services.

Information on the average time between referral and care management assessment is not available.

Information on the percentage of new clients aged 18 and over whose assessment started during the year by length of time from first contact with social services to start of assessment has been placed in the Library.

Cataract Units

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been treated at independent treatment scheme cataract units in *(a)* Oxfordshire and *(b)* England. [17416]

Mr. Byrne: To date, over 25,000 cataract procedures have been carried out by independent sector treatment centres and mobile units, none of which have been carried out in Oxfordshire. Data on how many patients were treated by the national health service using locally commissioned independent sector providers are not collected centrally.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether strategic health authorities will underwrite the costs of independent treatment scheme cataract units which are underused by patients. [17420]

Mr. Byrne: For wave one, primary care trusts currently underwrite independent sector treatment centres, but we expect that, over the lifetime of a contract, all contracts will be fully utilised by national health service patients.

Choice Agenda

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much spare capacity she estimates will be required within the NHS to allow it to meet the Government's choice agenda. [15141]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service is expanding capacity in order to provide better patient care, shorter waits and greater patient choice.

Patient choice may lead to changes in the distribution of capacity use as particular hospitals respond. This will be facilitated by payment by results which will also provide incentives to maximising the use of available capacity.

Coeliac Disease

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she is raising awareness of the causes and treatments of coeliac disease; what NHS treatments are available to treat the disease; and if she will make a statement. [17890]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* Most people with coeliac disease receive advice from their general practitioner (GP) on self-management of their condition, and specifically on the exclusion of foods containing gluten from their diet. A wide range of gluten-free foods are available on national health service prescription and these may be prescribed where a GP considers it necessary to ensure effective self-management of the condition.

The NHS Plan promotes and supports self care as one of the five key service elements of a patient centred NHS (preventive care, self care, primary care, hospital care, intermediate care). This is about promoting the involvement of patients and the public in their own treatment and care, by providing appropriate facilities eg through information, education, training, equipment and peer support and by partnership with health and social care professionals where necessary. Patients have access to NHS Direct, NHS Direct Online which include a health encyclopaedia and frequently asked questions, which cover a wide range of health related issues.

Community Nurses

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to change the car mileage allowance payable to community nurses working in the NHS. [18366]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of the NHS Staff Council to set these rates. A copy of the complete agenda for change terms and conditions of service handbook, which sets out the new pay structure and additional terms is available in the Library.

Consultants

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many senior hospital consultants have taken early retirement since 2001. [19379]

Mr. Byrne: The number of early retirements under the national health service pension scheme for consultants in England and Wales is shown in the table. It is not possible to identify senior consultants separately. The data represents early retirements effective during 2001 to 2006.

	Total consultant early pension awards
2000	12
2001	44
2002	151
2003	145
2004	135
2005	120
2006	72

Countess of Chester Hospital

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients from Wales were treated at the Countess of Chester hospital in the last three years for which records are available. [18535]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the Chair of the Countess of Chester Hospital National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Jim Sharples informing him of your enquiry. He will reply shortly and a letter will be placed in the Library.

Diet

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school children who regularly have (i) school meals and (ii) packed lunches. [19003]

Jacqui Smith: I have been asked to reply.

Information on pupils regularly having school meals or packed lunches is not collected centrally.

The Government have launched a national audit of school food provision in order to assess the progress that is already being made by local authorities and schools. The national audit, which began on 17 October, will cover issues such as how much is being spent on school meals ingredients, how they are provided, whether children get hot or cold meals and the percentage of pupils currently buying school meals.

Digital Hearing Aids

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost to the NHS is of *(a)* a digital hearing aid, *(b)* the fitting of a digital hearing aid and *(c)* assessment for a digital hearing aid. [18543]

Mr. Byrne: The average cost to the national health service of purchasing a digital hearing aid is £88.40 in 2004–05.

There is currently no central data collection on the average cost of the fitting of, or assessment for, digital hearing aids as this service is currently excluded from the annual reference costs collection.

Direct Payments (Social Care)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to expand the use of direct payments in social care services. [20421]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* We have taken a number of steps to expand the use of direct payments. We have changed the law so it is now a duty on local councils to make direct payments, not just a power. We also introduced the direct payments development fund, which is £9 million over three years, to encourage investment in direct payments support services. In addition, we have strengthened the performance indicator to monitor the take-up of direct payments in each local council.

We have produced a range of user-friendly information which councils should supplement with locally appropriate information.

We have also consulted in our recent Green Paper, "Independence, Well-being and Choice", on ways to extend the benefits of direct payments to those currently excluded, by using an agent for those without the capacity to consent, or unable to manage even with assistance.

We have acknowledged that our ability to increase the number of people using direct payments is limited by the barriers some people experience taking them up. Some people find that the responsibilities that come with having a direct payment are too much for them. We are piloting the introduction of individual budgets for those with assessed social care needs which will include looking at how those who receive services can be supported.

Doctor Training

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* senior house officer posts there are in England and *(b)* how many were filled by non-UK trained doctors in each year since 1997. [17715]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of medically qualified senior house officer (SHO) and equivalent posts in the United Kingdom is not collected centrally.

Information on the number of medically qualified SHO and equivalents in England and the number who qualified outside the United Kingdom since 1997 is shown in the table.

Number of medically qualified SHOs and equivalents[1] in England and number of SHO and equivalents who qualified outside the UK

Number (headcount)

	Medically qualified SHOs and equivalents in England	*Medically qualified SHOs and equivalents who qualified outside the UK*
1997	14,580	5,722
1998	14,774	5,592
1999	14,812	5,335
2000	15,081	5,216
2001	15,409	5,422
2002	16,685	6,281
2003	18,212	7,727
2004	20,094	9,362

[1] Excludes all staff with a dental specialty. Information about country of qualification is derived from the General Medical Council.

Source:

National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.

Endometriosis

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many women were diagnosed with endometriosis in the last year for which figures are available; [19371]

(2) what steps the Government have taken to support patients with endometriosis; [19372]

(3) if she will commission research into early diagnosis of endometriosis. [19373]

Mr. Byrne: Information on women diagnosed with endometriosis is not available in the form requested. In 2003–04, the number of finished consultant episodes[1] (FCEs) in national health service hospitals in England where the primary diagnosis was endometriosis (ICD10 code N80) was 16,350[2].

The Department of Health supports the two main voluntary organisations in the field, the National Endometriosis Society and Endometriosis SHE Trust, by providing funding towards central administrative costs and for specific projects.

The Government fund medical and health research in a number of different ways. The main agency through which the Government fund medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Office of Science and Technology, part of the Department of Trade and Industry. In 2002–03, the MRC spent £1 million on endometriosis and the general physiology of the endometrium.

[1] A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

[2] *Source:*

Hospital episode statistics, Department of Health.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she expects all hospitals to become foundation hospitals. [17930]

Mr. Byrne: The Government are committed to ensuring that all acute hospital trusts are in a position to apply for foundation status.

General Medical Services Contract

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish the new Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) as part of the review of the General Medical Services contract; and what progress has been made in the review of QOF so far. [18360]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers are responsible for reviewing the general medical services contract with the British Medical Association's general practitioners' committee. Negotiations are in progress and negotiators have confirmed some changes will be made to the Quality and Outcomes Framework from April 2006.

Health Services (Essex)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many speech and language therapists have been on staff in the Essex strategic health authority in each of the last three years. [18089]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of speech and language therapists that have been on staff in the Essex strategic health authority (SHA) in each of the last three years is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: Qualified speech and language therapists in the Essex SHA area by organisation as at 30 September in each specified year

Headcount

	Organisation code	2002	2003	2004
Essex SHA total	Q03	131	136	140
Basildon Primary Care Trust (PCT)	5GR	31	18	17
Castle Point and Rochford PCT	5JP	[1]—	14	18
Colchester PCT	5GM	[1]—	30	33
Epping Forest PCT	5AJ	27	31	29
Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust	RDE	32	[1]—	[1]—
Maldon and South Chelmsford PCT	5GL	33	35	34
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust	RQ8	2	1	1
South Essex Partnership NHS Trust	RWN	6	7	8

[1] Zero

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census.

Hospital Food

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent estimate she has made of *(a)* weight loss and *(b)* protein loss among patients in hospital for (i) 0 to 6, (ii) 7 to 13, (iii) 14 to 29 and (iv) 30 days and over; [18941]

(2) what research she has commissioned to assess the extent of malnutrition after admission among *(a)* hospital in-patients and *(b)* residents of care and nursing homes. [18942]

Mr. Byrne: There have been no estimates or research on this carried out centrally. Essence of Care, published in 2003, sets benchmarks for screening and assessment to identify patients' nutritional needs in health and social care settings, and helps healthcare professionals to devise appropriate care plans.

Hospital Re-admissions

Barbara Keeley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rates of re-admission to hospitals were in *(a)* England and *(b)* Lancashire in each year since 1997. [15096]

Mr. Byrne *[pursuant to the reply, 17 October 2005, Official Report, c. 763W]:* My previous reply should read as follows:

Re-admission data from 1998–99, which is calculated using the re-admission rate definition, "emergency re-admissions to hospitals within 28 days of discharge to hospitals", is available at www.nchod.nhs.uk, where a full definition is given in the guidance notes.

I regret that due to a clerical error, table 2 in the reply that the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health (Miss Melanie Johnson) gave the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 22 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 758W was incorrect. The correct information is contained in this answer.

Hospital Staffing

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations Ministers have received from the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health on the availability of senior house officer posts. [18066]

Mr. Byrne: No representations have been received by Ministers from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on the availability of senior house officer posts.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many junior doctors completed training in 2004; and how many senior house officers posts were available in that year. [18067]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect data on the number of doctors completing training in any given year. Such data for 2004 would be available from the competent authorities for postgraduate medical education at the time, the Specialist Training Authority of the Medical Royal Colleges and the joint committee on postgraduate training for general practice.

In the September 2004 census, the number of medically qualified senior house officers and equivalents was 20,094 in England. This was an increase of 1,882 (10 per cent.) from the previous year and an increase of 5,514 (38 per cent.) since 1997.

The census is a count of doctors on particular salary scales or their equivalents, not a count of doctors with a particular job description. These figures therefore include trust doctors, clinical fellows and other such posts.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations Ministers have received on phasing out senior house officer posts under the modernising medical careers initiative. [18068]

Mr. Byrne: The modernising medical careers proposals for specialist training have yet to be agreed in detail. The proposals would see the gradual phasing out of the senior house officer grade to be replaced by structured programmes of training leading to the award of a certificate of completion of training.

We have consulted widely on these proposals and will continue to engage with stakeholders to manage transition.

Hospital Treatments

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost was of procedures carried out by *(a)* Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust and *(b)* other teaching hospital trusts in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by specialty. [18913]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the average costs of national health service hospital services is made available through the annual NHS reference costs collection. The NHS reference cost index (RCI) provides an indication of the costs of hospital services in individual NHS trusts against the national average. Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has an RCI score of 115 relative to the average of 100, based on 2003–04 data, the most recent year for which figures are available. NHS reference costs are not broken down by speciality.

Lancashire NHS Teaching Trust

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the job titles of the staff employed at Lancashire NHS Teaching Trust; and how many full-time equivalent staff are employed in each role. [21690]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* This is a matter for the Chair of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Mr. Dennis Benson informing him of your inquiry.

Local Health Communities

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what systems are in place to ensure that her Department works closely with local health communities to understand their requirement for extra capacity in the services it provides. [19890]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Department carries out regular capacity planning and local delivery planning (LDP) processes with strategic health authorities (SHAs). In both of these, the Department worked closely with SHAs and, through them, with primary care trusts to understand overall capacity requirements in order to deliver the national targets for 2005–06 to 2007–08, as set out in "National Standards, Local Action".

Capacity planning guidance is available at on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/86/65/04118665.pdf.

The LDP technical note is available on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/54/49/04095449.pdf.

Lupus

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the standard of care available to those suffering from lupus; and what action is being taken to raise awareness of lupus among health professionals. [18363]

Mr. Byrne: The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions, while specifically aimed at those with neurological conditions, is relevant for all people with long-term conditions, including lupus. The NSF addresses a range of key issues including the need for equitable access to a range of services; good quality information and support for patients and carers; the ability to see a specialist and get the right investigations and diagnosis as quickly as possible.

Addressing the training needs of health professionals is the responsibility of the appropriate regulatory bodies. They set standards for the pre-registration training of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, approve the education institutions that provide the training and determine the curricula.

The post-registration training needs of national health service staff are decided against local priorities, informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service.

Meniere's Disease

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to help sufferers of Meniere's disease. [17093]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service and social services provide a range of health and social care services tailored to the varying individual needs of patients with Meniere's disease, allowing them to manage their condition, maintain independence and achieve the best quality of life.

The NHS improvement plan has set out the Government's commitment to improve care for people with long-term conditions by moving from reactive care towards a patient-centred approach. Strategic health authorities and primary care trusts have all received the national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions. While the NSF is principally concerned with improving health and social care services for people with a long-term neurological condition, it will address some of the generic issues that are important to people living with other long-term conditions. The principles in the NSF apply equally to improving quality of life and promoting independent living for anyone living with a long-term condition.

Mental Health Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate has been made of how many child psychiatrists need to be trained before each mentally ill child under the age of 18 years can be treated by a specialist qualified to work specifically with children. [18804]

Mr. Byrne: It is not routine practice for every child with a mental illness to be seen by a psychiatrist. Many children are treated by professionals such as a psychologist, mental health nurse or primary mental health worker, often as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Individual trusts are responsible for determining their workforce needs in the light of the mix of skills of all members of the agencies and services in their area, not just child psychiatrists.

The work force review team hosted by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Workforce Development Confederation and in partnership with the Severn and Wessex Deanery makes recommendations on the future of the healthcare work force on an annual basis. These recommendations inform local commissioning decisions, alongside local knowledge of work force demand.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many children with mental illness are being treated in adult wards; [18827]

(2) how many children in acute hospitals for mental illness problems are in *(a)* adult wards and *(b)* specialist children's wards. [19009]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the form requested.

In the period from 1 April to 30 June 2005 in England, there were 589 hospital occupied bed days spent by patients aged under 16 on admission on adult psychiatric wards. The equivalent figure for patients aged 16 or 17 on admission was 10,269.

In the same period there were 38,761 hospital occupied bed days spent by patients aged under 18 in specialist wards for child and adolescent mental health services.

In the long-term our objective is as set out in the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (September 2004) which states that,

"... young people who require admission to hospital for mental health care should have access to appropriate care in an environment suited to their age and development".

In the majority of cases with only a few exceptions this means that adult wards would not be appropriate and the national health service should work towards reducing the use of adult psychiatric wards for children and young people under 18.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have been treated in each of the last five years for mental disorders linked to cannabis use. [19008]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of finished consultant episodes for mental disorders linked to cannabis use for those aged 16 and under is shown in the table.

Finished consultant episodes (FCEs)[1] with a primary psychiatric diagnosis of a mental or behavioural disorder due to the use of cannabinoids (ICD-10 code F12), by age and gender, England, 1999–2000 to 2003–04[2]

	Age 16 or under at end of episode		
Data year	*Male*	*Female*	*All FCEs*
2003–04[2]	70	30	100
2002–03	40	20	60
2001–02	70	20	80
2000–01	40	20	50
1999–2000	40	10	50

[1] A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. The figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

[2] Data has not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed. Disclosure rules apply due to the sensitive nature of the data; therefore, figures have been rounded to the nearest ten. Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source:
Hospital episode statistics, National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Modernising Medical Careers Initiative

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will meet the British Medical Association to discuss the Modernising Medical Careers initiative. [18532]

Mr. Byrne: However, Departmental officials and the modernising medical careers implementation team work closely with the British Medical Association (BMA) in taking this initiative forward and Ministers involve themselves when the need arises or the BMA seeks a meeting.

Neonatal Care

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average daily number of cots available in wards classified as intensive care neonates or equivalent was in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority for each year since 1996–97; [18767]

(2) which national health service trusts provide neonatal *(a)* intensive, *(b)* high dependence and *(c)* special care in England; [18769]

(3) what the average occupancy rate for neonatal units was in each year since 1997. [18770]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

The number and location of neonatal intensive care cots is for the national health service neonatal networks to determine, taking account of local demand. Strategic health authority areas will increase or decrease cots to reflect demand.

Netcare UK

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the profit made by Netcare UK at the Trafford Diagnostic and Treatment Centre in the first three months of its operation. [20299]

Mr. Byrne: *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* An estimate has not been made centrally.

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of an operation at the Trafford Diagnostic and Treatment Centre has been since it opened. [20300]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The case mix at the Trafford surgical centre is varied. As the contract is procured according to the total service (staff, building, clinical supplies), it is not possible to provide this figure.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints she has received in respect of the role played by Netcare within the national health service in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [17526]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The responsibility for handling complaints rests with the appropriate national health service primary care trust or acute trust that referred the patients to the independent treatment centre. Such complaints are handled through the NHS complaints process. The Department is not involved in the resolution of such complaints.

Under contract terms, the Department is required to be notified by an independent treatment centre of any complaints in relation to treatment they provide to NHS patients. To date, the Department has been notified of nine such cases since the service commenced in February 2004 and since then over 18,000 patients have been treated.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of bills of each NHS acute trust in England were paid within 30 days in the most recent period for which figures are available. [18074]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

The most recent period for which figures are available is as reported in the individual final accounts of national health service trusts for 2004–05.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of a *(a)* cataract operation, *(b)* hip replacement and *(c)* gall bladder removal was in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2005 in (A) nominal and (B) real terms. [18339]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the following tables, which shows the average costs within these areas, sourced from the reference costs collection. The latest available data is for 2003–04. Cost data for 2005–06 is not yet available.

HRG	HRG description	Description	Nominal (£) 1997–98	Nominal (£) 2001–02	2003–04 prices[1] (£) 1997–98	2003–04 prices[1] (£) 2001–02
B02	Phakoemulsification Cataract Extraction with Lens Implant	cataract operation	698	672	803	711
B03	Other Cataract Extraction with Lens Implant	cataract operation	711	740	818	783
G13	Cholecystectomy >69 or with complications or comorbidities	gall bladder removal	1,812	2,311	2,084	2,447
G14	Cholecystectomy <70 without complications or comorbidities	gall bladder removal	1,327	1,574	1,526	1,667
H02	Primary Hip Replacement	hip replacement	3,680	4,359	4,233	4,617

HRG	HRG description	Description	Nominal (£) 2003–04
B13[2]	Phakoemulsification Cataract Extraction and Insertion of Lens	cataract operation	717
B14[2]	Non Phakoemulsification Cataract Surgery	cataract operation	793
G13	Cholecystectomy >69 or with complications or comorbidities	gall bladder removal	2,449
G14	Cholecystectomy <70 without complications or comorbidities	gall bladder removal	1,723
H80[2]	Primary Hip Replacement Cemented	hip replacement	4,750
H81[2]	Primary Hip Replacement Uncemented	hip replacement	4,603

[1] As calculated by the gross domestic product deflator, 28 September 2005.
[2] New HRG version 3.5 provided more detailed information for cataract operations and hip replacement procedures in 2003–04.
Note:
Data source: 1997–98, 2001–02 and 2003–04 reference costs.
Source:
1997–98, 2001–02 and 2003–04 reference costs.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the merits of distributing funding for specialised services through specialist commissioning groups, rather than through primary care trusts. [18458]

Mr. Byrne: On 19 October, we announced a review, chaired by Sir David Carter, into commissioning arrangements for specialised services with a view to building on current good practice and ensuring consistent arrangements across the whole country that fit in with wider national health service reform. As part of the review we will look at how best to organise the funding of specialised services to support the planning of specialist provision and manage the risks of very high cost, unpredictable treatments.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what account is taken of the higher costs of tertiary procedures in the tariff under payment by results; and if she will make a statement. [18901]

Mr. Byrne: The higher costs of tertiary care is recognised and addressed under payment by results in three ways. Additional payment over and above tariff for a defined list of procedures and diagnoses, the exclusion from tariff of certain high cost drugs, devices and procedures and the use of local flexibilities which allow primary care trusts to provide additional funding to providers in certain circumstances where new technology is being used.

NHS Recruitment (Doctors)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts are operating a freeze on the recruitment of doctors. [19390]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally, but any local actions there may have been should be seen in the context that the number of consultants has increased by 9,736, or 45 per cent., since 1997 and the number of general practitioners by 4,148, or 15 per cent., in the same period.

NHS Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated number of *(a)* physiotherapists and *(b)* speech and language therapists is in each primary care trust; and what the target establishment is for each trust. [18172]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the numbers of qualified physiotherapists and speech and language therapists employed by each national health service organisation has been placed in the Library.

The numbers of qualified physiotherapists and speech and language therapists employed in the NHS has increased between September 1997 and 2004 by 4,900, or 34 per cent. and 1,685, or 35 per cent. respectively.

Information is not held centrally on the establishment of each NHS organisation.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what workforce planning strategies are in place for *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses, *(c)* physiotherapists, *(d)* other allied health professions and *(e)* midwives. [21735]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* It is the responsibility of primary care trusts and strategic health authorities (SHAs) to analyse their local situation and develop plans, in liaison with their local national health

service trusts and primary care providers, to deliver high quality NHS services and take action to recruit the appropriate staff required to deliver these services.

At a national level, the Department asks SHAs to submit local delivery plans covering all the main staff groups, which feed into national supply and demand modelling. The workforce review team closely liaises with the Department, the NHS and stakeholders to determine the future requirements of the NHS workforce, and advises the NHS on future training needs.

In the longer term, the Department has recently commissioned work to analyse the level of need/demand for the medical workforce over the next 20 to 30 years and whether existing supply plans will meet these. This analysis will form the background to discussions on the development and planning of revised specialty training programmes as part of modernising medical careers implementation, and also inform the deliberations of the medical joint implementation group considering how many more medical school places are required.

NHS Suppliers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that suppliers to NHS organisations are paid promptly; and what representations her Department have received in the last 12 months from suppliers to NHS organisations who have not been paid promptly. [19133]

Mr. Byrne: National Health Service Trusts and primary care trusts are required to comply with the Confederation of British Industry's better payment practice code (BPPC) target of paying 95 per cent. of undisputed invoices within contract terms or 30 days where no terms have been agreed. By 2004–05, the NHS paid around 83 per cent. of its bills within 30 days, compared with about 77 per cent. in 1996–97.

Strategic health authorities monitor the performance of individual NHS bodies and work with poor performing organisations to achieve and maintain a level of payment performance consistent with Government accounting regulations and the BPPC.

The Department are not aware of any recent representations from suppliers to NHS organisations on the specific issue of prompt payment of bills.

Night-Time Services

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the provision of night-time services by general practitioners in Essex. [18004]

Mr. Byrne: Primary care trusts (PCTs) have the responsibility of ensuring that they provide, or secure provision of a high quality, sustainable out-of-hours service for their local population.

All out-of-hours services must be delivered to the national quality requirements, ensuring patients have access to consistently high quality and responsive care, regardless of where they live. Providers must deliver services that meet the quality requirements, as a contractual obligation. The requirements stipulate that:

Patients will be guaranteed a general practitioner consultation—including a home visit if there is a clinical need.

Patients are treated by the clinician best equipped to meet their needs in the most appropriate location.

Services will be regularly audited to ensure that patients are receiving quality care.

Providers of night-time services in Essex are shown in the table.

Area	*Provider(s)*
Colchester	Colchester PCT
South East Essex	Essex Ambulance Trust, Care UK, NHS Direct
South West Essex	Essex Ambulance Trust, South Essex Emergency Doctor Services (SEEDS), NHS Direct
Mid Essex	Essex Ambulance Trust, NHS Direct
Uttlesford	The Emergency Doctor Service
Tendring	Prime Care
Harlow and Epping	Partnership of East London Co-operative (PELC)

Nurses

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses have undertaken return to practice courses in each year since 1999. [18376]

Mr. Byrne: By the end of March 2004, over 18,500 former nurses, midwives and health visitors had returned to work in the national health service. No information is held on the numbers returning following return to practice courses.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts meet the Department's targets for the employment of specialist NHS nurses. [17722]

Mr. Byrne: There is no such central target for the employment of specialist nurses.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many overseas nurses were registered by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in each of the last three years, broken down by country of origin. [21222]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The independent regulator for nurses, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, publishes annual statistics on the number of overseas nurses registered each year by country. These are available from its website at: www.nmc-org.uk.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Overseas Nursing Programme-supervised placements will be provided by approved education institutes in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* each of the next two years. [21225]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* This information is not held by the Department. The Nursing and Midwifery Council is responsible for approving education institutions to run overseas nursing programmes. Education institutions are responsible for allocating placements to students in liaison with national health service trusts and other placement providers.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to increase the number of Overseas Nursing Programme-supervised placements provided by approved education institutes. [21226]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The provision of overseas nurses programmes-supervised placements is a matter for local determination and is agreed in partnership by strategic health authorities, employers, approved education institutions and the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Obesity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what criteria were used in making the decision not to include obesity management as a clinical domain in the General Medical Services contract; [19010]

(2) whether she plans to include incentive points for obesity management in the review of the General Medical Services contract. [19020]

Mr. Byrne: During the negotiations which led to the current quality and outcomes framework, many clinical conditions were considered. Those with the best evidence base for the effectiveness of intervention in primary care were included. As part of the on-going development of the framework, indicators will be reviewed as new evidence is produced.

NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom Health Ministers, are responsible for reviewing the general medical services contract with the British Medical Association's general practitioners' committee. Negotiators have confirmed that some changes will be made to the quality and outcomes framework from April 2006.

Out-of-hours Care

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what improvements to out-of-hours patient care from general practitioners have taken place in the last two years. [18833]

Mr. Byrne: The changes to the general practitioner (GP) contract have enabled primary care trusts to address service fragmentation and introduce an integrated local out-of-hours service between general practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, accident and emergency, NHS Direct and social care. Some £322 million is available this year to help fund out-of-hours services in addition to the unified budget which totals £53.9 billion in 2005–06.

New standards for out-of-hours care came into force from January 2005 that assures high quality, responsive and consistent out-of-hours services across the country. This ensures that patients who need a doctor will be seen by a GP either in their own home or at a primary care centre.

Out-patient Appointments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1523W, on out-patient appointments, how many missed out-patient appointments there have been in each year since 1997–98. [18128]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is available on the Department's website at www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/outpatient_attendances.htm.

Patient Appointments

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the costs of missed *(a)* general practitioner and *(b)* hospital appointments in the last year for which figures are available; and what practical steps she recommends that general practitioners and NHS trusts can take to combat missed appointments; [18566]

(2) how many missed general practitioner appointments there were *(a)* across the NHS and *(b)* in each primary care trust in the most recent year for which figures are available. [18568]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) on 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1523W.

In addition, the "Keep it or cancel it, but don't forget it" campaign, which is run by Developing Patient Partnerships, an organisation which is part funded by the Department, is intended to raise the awareness of the impact of missed general practice appointments. The campaign provides practices and primary care trusts with tools to help them address missed appointments including posters, stickers and examples of good practice from other practices.

Patient Care Plans

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whose responsibility it is to monitor the percentage of patients who have access to *(a)* a written care plan and *(b)* a named nurse; [19260]

(2) what independent assessment *(a)* has been made and *(b)* is planned of the percentage of patients who (i) have a written care plan and (ii) are allocated a named nurse. [19312]

Mr. Byrne: No assessment has been carried out centrally.

The named nurse concept, which aims to promote personalised and patient-focused care, is complemented by a number of initiatives. These include standards for better health, which includes a core standard on involving patients in their care and the public sector agreement targets which require all patients who need it, to have a personalised care plan. Strategic health authorities and primary care trusts are responsible for ensuring implementation of Government policy.

Patient Records

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list hospital trusts which send confidential patient records abroad for processing. [18824]

Mr. Byrne: We are aware of reports that Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals National Health Service Trust currently employ a South African company to type up medical notes. It is the responsibility of local NHS clinicians and managers to ensure the confidentiality of patient information in these, as in all other circumstances. I understand that the trust has followed guidelines published by the Information Commissioner and the European Commission relating to the transfer of personal data outside the European Union.

More generally, details of trusts sending patient records abroad for processing are not held centrally.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2839W, on physiotherapy, when the action plan was published; and if she will place a copy of the plan in the Library. [19127]

Mr. Byrne: The physiotherapy workforce action plan was published on 23 May 2005. A copy is available in the Library.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the Action Plan for physiotherapy graduates. [21720]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* It is too early to assess the impact the action plan has made on physiotherapy graduates. The Department is continuing to work closely with the national health service workforce review team and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy to ensure progress on implementing the action plan is maintained.

Private Health Centres

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how the locations of new private health centres providing services to the NHS will be determined; and what assessment will be made of their impact on local health economies; [17425]

(2) whether she plans to consult *(a)* local communities, *(b)* local authorities, *(c)* local patient forums and *(d)* local community groups and associations on the possible location of new private health centres that will provide services to the NHS. [17426]

Mr. Byrne: External procurements for both primary and secondary care have been developed with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of local requirements specifying when necessary desired locations as commissioners. SHAs and PCTs are expected to assess and plan for the impact on their local health economies.

It is for SHAs and PCTs to decide whether, how and who to consult and take into account the consultation requirements of Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act.

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether a conflict of interest arises for employees of the NHS who may hold shares in new private health centres providing services to the NHS; and if she will make a statement. [17427]

Mr. Byrne: No specific assessment has been made. There are long-established rules, whereby employees of the national health service are expected to declare any possible conflicts of interest.

Professional Health Courses

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to change the funding of professional health courses; and if she will make a statement. [21143]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* There are no current plans to change the funding of professional health courses. The national health service will continue to contract with higher education institutes for non-medical education and training. The Secretary of State keeps the funding arrangements under constant review to ensure that the wide range of education and training of health professions is supported in the best way possible.

Public Consultation (Closures)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many community and college hospitals are planned for closure, subject to local public consultations procedures; and how many beds this represents; [17701]

(2) how many NHS hospital beds are planned for closure subject to local public consultation procedures; [17702]

(3) how many NHS hospital beds have closed since May; how many were *(a)* intermediate care and *(b)* rehabilitation beds; and how many further closures are planned in each case. [17703]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally collected.

Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to integrate delivery of rehabilitation services across the NHS and social services departments. [20422]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* We expect local health and social care communities to work together with other voluntary and statutory agencies to take a community wide approach to developing a jointly agreed commissioning plan for services. Changes we are making in the national health service, such as payment by results and commissioning a patient-led NHS, will help to draw health and social care together. The national service framework for long-term conditions, issued in March this year, emphasises that rehabilitation is most effective when health and social care bodies work collaboratively with each other. The detail of which model of service best suits the needs of local people is a local matter to be determined by the NHS and social services working in partnership.

Scanning Services

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 4 October 2005 concerning mobile scanning units, how her Department defines modest revenue costs. [18097]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* As indicated in my reply of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2841W, this information is not centrally collected. However, the Department estimates that the modest cost would be in the region of £100–£200 on an estimated stay of seven to 14 days, depending on the length of the time the Alliance Medical Ltd. mobile unit is on site

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methodology was used to calculate value for money in the contract with Alliance Medical Ltd. for scans. [19059]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* Value for money from the services procured from Alliance Medical Ltd. for the mobile magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning and reporting services was ensured with a quality specification and comparison with the latest available national health service MRI direct access tariff information at the time the contract was negotiated.

Sexual Health

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken to make schoolchildren aware of the services provided by sexual health clinics. [22348]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

One of the aims of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, is to improve access to contraceptive and sexual health advice services for young people who are sexually active.

The national media campaign stresses the importance of using condoms to protect against unplanned pregnancies and STIs and highlights the availability of confidential advice for young people on sexual health issues. The campaign also includes messages on the benefits of delaying sexual activity and resisting peer pressure to have sex before they are ready.

Guidance on Sex and Relationships Education issued by DfES in 2000 recommends that schools should provide young people with details on how they can access services and the Government are also promoting the development of on-site health advice services in a range of non-traditional settings, such as in schools, FE colleges and Connexions Centres.

Sleep Apnoea

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on services for sufferers of sleep apnoea. [21324]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Patients with sleep apnoea are able to access a range of national health service and social care services, tailored to meet their individual needs, to help them manage their condition. It is for health professionals in primary care organisations, in consultation with other stakeholders, to determine which services their populations require and ensure the appropriate level of provision.

The national service framework (NSF) for long term conditions, while specifically aimed at people with neurological conditions, is relevant for people with all long-term conditions, including sleep apnoea. The NSF addresses a range of key issues including the need for equitable access to a range of services; good quality information and support for patients and carers; the ability to see a specialist and get the right investigations and diagnosis as quickly as possible.

Smoking

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact on the health of people in Liverpool of *(a)* a partial ban on smoking in pubs and restaurants as proposed in the White Paper and *(b)* a total ban on smoking in pubs and restaurants; and if she will make a statement. [17893]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* No assessment has been made specifically for Liverpool. The Government published a partial regulatory impact assessment as part of the "Smokefree Elements of the Health Improvement and Protection Bill", the consultation paper launched this summer. This contained estimates of the health impact of different options. A copy is available in the Library.

"Supporting People" Initiative

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions her Department has had with the Association of Directors of Social Services on the "Supporting People" initiative. [21684]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The Department has not had formal discussions with the Association of Directors of Social Services of the "Supporting People" initiative recently. We are, however, in regular discussions with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the supporting people programme.

Surgical Procedures (Costs)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of surgical procedures on the NHS has been in each year since 1995. [19319]

Mr. Byrne: No data are available centrally that separately identifies the average cost of providing surgical procedures within the national health service. However, NHS reference cost data is collected annually at the level of health care resources groups (HRGs) and show a composite cost for a procedure or treatment rather than individual procedures. Definitions and breakdowns of the HRGs are published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre and available on its website at http://www.icservices.nhs.uk/casemix/pages/tools.asp.

Details of NHS reference costs from 1997–98 to 2003–04 are published on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/FinanceAndPlanning/NHSReferenceCosts/fs/en.

Therapy

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many established full-time equivalent posts there are in each strategic health authority in England for *(a)* speech therapists and *(b)* occupational therapists; and how many of those posts are vacant. [17793]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of full-time equivalent occupational therapists and speech and language therapists employed in the national health service within each strategic health authority (SHA) and Government office region, together with the rate of vacancies lasting three months or more.

Health and Social Care Information Centre vacancies survey March 2005—NHS three month vacancies by Government office region and SHA area, for occupational therapy staff and speech and language therapy staff—three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		Occupational therapy			Speech and language therapy		
		Three month vacancy rate percentage	Three month vacancy number	Staff in post) full-time equivalent	Three month vacancy rate percentage	Three month vacancy number	(Staff in post) full-time equivalent
		March 2005		September 2004	March 2005		September 2004
England		3.9	567	13,879	2.5	127	4,973
North East Government Office Region Total	A	0.9	7	718	1.6	5	301
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q10	1.3	4	276	1.6	2	124
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q09	0.7	3	443	1.7	3	177
North West Government Office Region Total	B	3.0	61	1,979	1.7	13	750
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q15	3.3	24	703	0.6	2	235
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q13	2.0	12	582	3.0	7	223
Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q14	3.5	25	694	1.4	4	293
Yorkshire and the Humber Government Office Region Total	D	3.6	52	1,415	2.0	9	458
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q11	2.3	8	389	0.0	0	130
South Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q23	4.5	21	436	2.1	3	137
West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q12	3.8	23	590	3.0	6	191
East Midlands Government Office Region Total	E	1.1	14	1,304	0.9	3	347
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q25	0.5	2	423	1.6	2	124
Trent Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q24	1.4	12	881	0.4	1	223
West Midlands Government Office Region Total	F	2.1	28	1,331	1.3	7	528
Birmingham and The Black Country Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q27	2.4	14	573	1.0	2	240
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q26	1.3	5	392	1.5	2	130
West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q28	2.4	9	366	1.5	2	158
East of England Government Office Region total	G	4.6	66	1,375	3.7	14	364
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority area total	Q02	10.3	34	299	4.2	4	79
Essex Strategic Health Authority area total	Q03	2.6	10	373	2.4	3	104
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority area total	Q01	3.0	22	703	4.3	8	182
London Government Office Region Total	H	10.0	231	2,078	4.8	49	982
North Central London Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q05	4.7	22	442	3.2	8	230
North East London Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q06	10.0	43	392	5.1	9	157
North West London Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q04	11.8	65	485	6.0	15	231
South East London Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q07	15.4	80	440	2.2	5	222
South West London Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q08	6.0	21	319	8.4	13	143
South East Government Office Region Total	J	4.1	87	2,033	3.0	24	760
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q17	1.9	7	390	0.0	0	152
Kent and Medway Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q18	2.6	11	388	3.6	6	159

Health and Social Care Information Centre vacancies survey March 2005—NHS three month vacancies by Government office region and SHA area, for occupational therapy staff and speech and language therapy staff—three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		Occupational therapy			*Speech and language therapy*		
		Three month vacancy rate percentage	*Three month vacancy number*	*(Staff in post) full-time equivalent*	*Three month vacancy rate percentage*	*Three month vacancy number*	*(Staff in post) full-time equivalent*
		March 2005		*September 2004*	*March 2005*		*September 2004*
Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q19	4.9	39	759	2.6	7	263
Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q16	5.6	30	496	5.4	11	186
South West Government Office Region Total	K	1.3	21	1,645	0.6	3	482
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q20	1.8	14	721	0.4	1	226
Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q22	1.2	5	396	2.1	2	93
South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q21	0.6	3	528	0.1	0	164

Three month vacancy notes:
1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2005
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents)
3. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post
4. Three month Vacancy Rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place
6 * figures where sum of staff in post (as at 30 September 2004) and vacancies (as at 31 March 2005) is less than 10

Staff in post notes:
1. Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

General notes:
1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts
4. Strategic Health Authority figures are based on Trusts, and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of healthcare
5. The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust cannot be assigned to a particular Strategic Health Authority
6. The 2005 Vacancy survey did not receive a valid return from the Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust. Figures for this Trust have been excluded from all applicable vacancy totals and calculations. Staff in post figures for this Trust are included in the England, Yorkshire and the Humber GOR and North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA totals so as to be consistent with other Health and Social Care Information Centre publications.

Sources:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

Waiting Times

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are on the waiting list for gastroscopic examinations at North Manchester General Hospital; and how many have been waiting more than *(a)* three and *(b)* six months. [20377]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 1 November 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Emergency Aid

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to develop a rapidly deployable reserve of tentage and medical supplies with associated aerial lift capability for future emergencies *(a)* unilaterally and *(b)* multilaterally following the recent experience in Kashmir. [23709]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has warehouses in three locations containing relief supplies including tents, plastic sheeting, tarpaulins and jerry cans. The warehouses are located in Marchington (UK), Dubai and Miami to ensure rapid deployment to disaster prone areas. DFID do not stockpile medical supplies because this is best managed by specialist agencies such as the World Health Organisation and suppliers of medical relief items which keep stockpiles that are readily available and can be used following a disaster. DFID's own stockpiles augment those of multilateral agencies such as the UN and Red Cross Movement.

DFID has an existing arrangement for airlift capacity through an air charter brokerage service. The recent UN Humanitarian Response Review Report includes consideration for improving airlift capacity. We are discussing with other agencies, our response to this report.

WALES

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 852W, on council tax revaluation, if he will list the *(a)* addresses of the properties that have moved up six bands and *(b)* local authority areas in which they fall. [22311]

Nick Ainger: It would not be appropriate to list the private addresses of such properties. However, information about the valuation history of an individual property can be found on the Valuation Office Agency website: http://www.voa.gov.uk/. A local authority breakdown is in the following table:

Local authority	*Number of properties moving up six bands*
Isle of Anglesey	3
Gwynedd	3
Conwy	2
Denbighshire	3
Flintshire	5
Powys	37
Wrexham	5
Cardiff	1
Bridgend	0
Rhondda Cynon Taff	4
Vale of Glamorgan	2
Ceredigion	1
Carmarthenshire	2
Pembrokeshire	2
Caerphilly	1
Merthyr Tydfil	0
Monmouthshire	10
Blaenau Gwent	0
Newport	2
Torfaen	0
Swansea	2
Neath Port Talbot	0

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17982]

Nick Ainger: Since the Wales Office was established in July 1999 we have not procured any vehicles. For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles made available to us by the Government Car and Despatch Agency, I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 written to him by the Chief Executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 and UIN15088. Copies of the letter are available in the Library.

National Assembly Elections

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to introduce national lists for elections to the National Assembly for Wales. [23483]

Nick Ainger: The Government have no plans to introduce a national list for elections to the National Assembly for Wales.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has for the reform of elections to the Welsh Assembly. [23484]

Nick Ainger: The Government's proposals for the current electoral system are set out in chapter 4 of the "Better Governance for Wales" White Paper, which was published on 15 June 2005.

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what he has identified as the most significant sustainable development impacts in relation to operation of the estate of his Department. [18129]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office is a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), and owns one building in London and leases office space in Cardiff. The DCA Estates Management Manual is being reviewed and will have notable impact on the Office's operations, and how they support sustainable development.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made on his Department's Sustainable Development Strategy. [18133]

Nick Ainger: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Progress with the relevant Strategy Plan is shown on DCA website, www.dca.gov.uk/dept/sustaindev/sustaindev.htm with publication of the final document planned for this autumn.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what reduction there has been in water consumption by his Department between 2002 and 31 March 2005. [18140]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office installed a water meter in June 2003. Monitoring of water consumption began in financial year 2004–05.

The Wales Office has no comparative data for previous years.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [20997]

Alan Johnson: Literacy and numeracy skills assessment form part of the routine consideration of applications for posts in this Department.

Nuclear Plants (Insurance)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of insuring each nuclear plant in the UK in each of the last five years; what the projected costs are for each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [23143]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* While current legislation requires nuclear operators to cover their liabilities through insurance (the Nuclear Installations Act 1965), the actual insurance costs for the nuclear industry are a private commercial matter between the operators and their insurers.

Office of Fair Trading

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria the Office of Fair Trading uses *(a)* to prioritise the investigation of cases referred to it and *(b)* to decide which cases not to investigate. [20382]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The funding of UK merger cases takes priority over other anti-trust work in Competition Enforcement Division because of the OFT's statutory responsibilities in relation to merger work. Where necessary in managing demand, staff are reallocated to merger work from other parts of the division. The division also gives priority to defending appeals against its anti-trust and merger decisions.

Anti-trust investigations are prioritised by considering a number of factors. These include: identification of possible consumer detriment, whether there is a reasonable prospect of the OFT being able to find sufficient further evidence to reach an infringement decision, the type of alleged infringement, aggravating or mitigating factors due to the conduct of the undertakings, the precedent value in taking such a case (including whether or not the potential breach is within one of the OFT's published priority themes) and whether the division is best placed to take the case forward.

We open over 1,200 preliminary enquiry cases each year. The above criteria may also be used as a framework to decide whether or not a case should be rejected. A lack of resource would not, in itself, be a determining factor in deciding whether or not to investigate a case.

	UK mergers examined	*References to the CC*
1995	473	9
1996	533	14
1997	396	10
1998	425	8
1999	415	10
2000	315	14
2001	356	10
January 2002 to March 2003[1]	414	21
April 2002 to March 2003	318	13
April 2003 to March 2004	270	12
April 2004 to March 2005	257	18

[1] The OFT's Annual Report changed from calendar year to financial year during this period.

Staff employed by Competition Enforcement Division (and its predecessor within OFT): Based on the number of staff in post at the last day of each year

	Number
2004	165
2003	158
2002	143
2001	112
2000	98
1999[1]	69
1998	53
1997	51
1996	46
1995	42

[1] Competition Enforcement Division was restructured on 1 December 1999 in anticipation of the coming into force of the major provisions of the Competition Act 1998.

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average length of time taken by the Office of Fair Trading was to complete a case investigation in the last period for which figures are available. [20383]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The information is as follows:

Mergers

We do not measure the average time to complete an investigation. Pre-notified mergers are considered under a statutory deadline for completion of 20 days. This can be extended by a further 10 days. Informally notified cases have an administrative deadline of 40 working days. Our published target is to achieve the latter in 90 per cent. of cases. Completed mergers have a four-month statutory deadline. In 2004–05 we met our statutory target in all cases, and our administrative target in 84 per cent. of cases.

Anti-trust investigations

As each investigation is unique, there is no useful average length of time taken to complete an investigation under the Competition Act 1998, although some guidance can be given about the timescale for an investigation depending upon the outcome in each case:

investigations that result in an infringement decision can be very lengthy, the lengthiest investigation to date has taken five and a half years; the largest group (about 40 per cent.) of investigations took between two to three years from the date of opening the case to the date of decision;

non-infringement decisions are generally completed more quickly; the majority of investigations are concluded in less than two years;

investigations can also be resolved informally, or closed for other reasons. The majority are resolved or closed within one year.

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases the Office of Fair Trading decided not to investigate on the basis of availability of resources in each of the last 10 years. [20384]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* All merger cases notified to the OFT are examined. Resources are allocated from other parts of the division to handle merger cases where necessary to manage demand.

For all other anti-trust work, the Competition Act 1998 did not come into force until March 2000. The new regime is fundamentally different in character to the previous competition enforcement regime. This answer is therefore confined to the current regime.

Available resources are only one factor taken into consideration when deciding which cases should be investigated. The response to PQ No. 20382 answered today explains the other considerations. A lack of resource would not, in itself, be a determining factor whether or not to investigate a case.

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account the Office of Fair Trading takes of available resources in the selection of cases to be investigated. [20385]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* All merger cases notified to the OFT are examined. Resources are allocated from other parts of the division where necessary to manage demand.

For all other anti-trust work, available resources are only one factor taken into consideration when deciding which cases should be investigated. The response to PQ No.20382 answered today explains the other considerations. A lack of resource would not, in itself, be a determining factor whether or not to investigate a case.

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases were investigated by the Office of Fair Trading in each of the last 10 years; and how many staff were employed by the Office of Fair Trading in each year. [20386]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The main provisions of the Competition Act 1998 came into force on 1 March 2000.

	Complaint cases opened (including cartel cases)	*Investigations launched*	*Decisions made*
2000[1]	1,475 (92)	[2]23	0
2001	1,298 (76)	63	8
January 2002 to March 2003[1]	1,382 (55)	70	17
April 2002 to March 2003	1,141 (31)	54	14
April 2003 to March 2004	1,140 (46)	41	8
April 2004 to March 2005	1,173 (27)	17	9

[1] From 1 March 2000.
[2] From 1 August 2000.
Note:
UK mergers examined:
(i) Under the Enterprise Act 2002 from 1 June 2003.
(ii) Under the Fair Trading Act 1973 prior to 1 July 2003.

Tesco

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* postcards and *(b)* emails he has received in 2005 making representations on (i) Tesco plc and (ii) the Tescopoly campaign. [22693]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I provided on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 911W.

UK Trade and Investment

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library a copy of the report prepared by Ernst and Young which considered the legitimacy of expenses incurred by staff of UK Trade and Investment. [21277]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* It would be inappropriate to publish the report in question, which contains material relevant to internal civil service management processes that have not yet been completed.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees of *(a)* his Department and *(b)* UK Trade and Investment are under suspension due to a disciplinary investigation. [21278]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* There are currently no members of the DTI or UK Trade and Investment under suspension due to a disciplinary investigation.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total employees' expenses budget for UK Trade and Investment was in each of the last five years. [21279]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* UK Trade and Investment is not an employer in its own right. The expenses of staff deployed on its work are met by its parent departments. The total amount allocated to UK Trade and Investment for travel and subsistence in 2003–04, the latest year for which full figures are available, was £8.4 million, and £7.7 million in 2002–03. These figures exclude living allowances for Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff living abroad. Comparable information for earlier years is not readily available.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what rules apply to the payment of expenses to employees of UK Trade and Investment. [21280]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* UK Trade and Investment does not employ staff on its own account. The people working on UK Trade and Investment activities remain employees of their parent departments, or are contracted to those departments. Insofar as they claim expenses, they would have to do so under the rules of the department meeting the particular claim.

The payment of expenses to civil servants and those contracted to work for Government Departments, is governed by the principles of good financial management as set out in Government Accounting and the Civil Service Management Code.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many websites are maintained by UK Trade and Investment aimed at helping businesses to trade with overseas countries; which *(a)* region and *(b)* overseas country is targeted by each website; and how many visits to each website there were in 2004–05. [21663]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) maintains a number of websites designed to meet the needs of our different customers. The main site is www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk. Country specific sites are provided to address particular customer needs and to publicise opportunities in the UK for foreign businesses. UKTI's English regional network has developed sites where this has been agreed with regional partners as part of individual regional strategies. These aim to complement the information on the main site. The remainder of the international network provides information on trade and investment opportunities via relevant areas on their local embassy or consulate sites provided via the FCO. Details on the UKTI sites focused on countries and the regions are listed as follows:

Website address	*Countries*	*Usage data*
National sites		
http://www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk	All countries	[1]Not available
http://www.overseas-trade.co.uk/	All countries	[2]6,739
Country specific sites		
http://uktradeinvest.britaus.net/	UK and Australia	Not available
http://www.uktradeinvestcanada.org/	UK and Canada	[3]Not available
http://www.cbbc.org/	UK and China	[4]Not available
http://www.westmarche.co.uk	UK and France	Not available
http://www.uktradeinvest.de/	UK and Germany	[5]10,357
http://www.ibpn.co.uk/	UK and India	[6]Not available
http://trade.uktradeinvest.jp/ukdirectory/	UK and Japan	[7]Not available
http://www.mexbritbusiness.org/	UK and Mexico	Not available
http://www.uktradeinvest.co.nz	UK and New Zealand	Not available
http://uktradeinvestusa.com and http://uktradeinvestusa.org/	UK and USA	[8]210,552
English region sites		
http://www.exporteastofengland.org.uk	Eastern region	[9]91,022
http://www.itrade.org.uk/	Eastern region	[10]Not available
http://www.emids.uktradeinvest.gov.uk/	East Midlands	[11]17,923
http://www.exportnortheast.com/	North East region	[12]278,310
http://www.uktisoutheast.com	South East region	[13]10,700
http://www.china-swengland-business.info/	South West region	[14]10,699
http://www.passportwm.org.uk/	West Midlands	[15]226,454

[1] Site was moved to a new technical infrastructure in September 2004. Information about hits on the new site was not available until August 2005. Data for the period 1 August 2005 to 30 September 2005 totalled 169,235. Comparable data from the previous system are not available.

[2] Data are for period August 2004 to July 2005 and are for unique visitors.

[3] Site receives approximately 265 visits per day (approx 97,000 per annum).

[4] Site is not managed by UKTI but funding is provided via grant in aid to the China-Britain Business Council.

[5] Data refer to visits for period October 2004 to September 2005.

[6] Site introduced in October 2005. Visitor statistics not yet available.

[7] Site was launched in June 2005 to promote UK creative companies and forms part of www.uknow.or.jp site. Visitor statistics are not available.

[8] Data refer to total sessions on the site in 2004–05.

[9] Data refer to total visitors to the site between April 2004 and March 2005.

[10] Site is provided to support Passport (a programme to develop clients' trade development capacity) customers in the Eastern region.

[11] Data are for period August 2004 to March 2005 only.

[12] Data are for the period July 2004 to March 2005.

[13] Site went live April 2005. The data on visits are for period April to September 2005.

[14] Data relate to hits since launch in October 2004.

[15] Site was launched in March 2005 to support Passport customers. Data refer to page views to September.

PRIME MINISTER

Avian Influenza

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Prime Minister if he will ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, at every meeting of the Cabinet for the duration of the threat, to present an update on the threat of avian influenza coming to the UK. [23707]

The Prime Minister: The Cabinet has been regularly kept informed of the threat posed by avian influenza to the UK.

TRANSPORT

Cambridgeshire County Council

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the reasons are for his Department's ruling that Cambridgeshire county council may not decide whether it should install signs saying No Entry Except for Cyclists or No Entry Except for Buses but must follow a central standard. [23003]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The design and use of traffic signs is specified in national regulations so that signs will be used consistently and safely. No-entry signs are safety critical signs that are used with physical barriers or to prevent conflicts and collisions between opposing streams of traffic. The combination with "Except buses" plates has been permitted for contraflow bus lanes in one-way streets or other bus-only facilities that it is clearly not appropriate for other vehicles to use. We do not believe that cyclists should be encouraged to cycle past no-entry signs, and the use of "except cycles" plates with no-entry signs is specifically prohibited by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD). There are other sign designs available to indicate routes that cycles and buses, but not other motor vehicles, can use.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the bill setting out the major changes to the enabling works required for the Crossrail project in Romford to be ready to be introduced. [20805]

Derek Twigg: The Crossrail Bill was introduced on 22 February and received its second reading on 19 July. The Bill currently seeks powers to temporarily divert two gas pipelines east-west along the southern edge of the proposed Crossrail depot worksite at Romford, in order to free up working space for the period of the Crossrail works.

A revised proposal is now being prepared in consultation with the utility company concerned which would instead divert the pipelines to the south, across Crow Lane to join an existing pipeline beneath Crowlands Heath Golf Course.

Any amendment to the Bill would take the form of an Additional Provision, which would be accompanied by an environmental assessment and which would trigger a new petitioning period for those affected. It would then be for the Select Committee to decide whether to accept the proposed amendment to the Bill.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the salaries of the directors of the Crossrail project have been in each year since the project's inception. [20806]

Derek Twigg: I understand from Cross London Rail Links Limited (CLRLL) that, until October 2004, all Directors were non-executive Transport for London (TfL) and Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) nominees, and were not remunerated by CLRLL. Sir Christopher Benson (who served as Chairman from 24 October 2001–26 October 2004), was paid £25,000 in financial year 2001–02, £60,000 in 2002–03, £60,000 in 2003–04 and £40,000 to October 2004.

Since October 2004, all Directors have been non-executive TfL and DfT nominees. The TfL nominee Directors and one of the DfT nominee directors are not remunerated by CLRL. Two of the DfT appointed Directors were paid £7,000 in total in the last financial year by CLRLL. Adrian Montague (who took over as Chairman on 26 October 2004), was not remunerated.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22577]

Ms Buck: A list of current formal public consultations by the Department and its Executive Agencies is listed in the following table. They are available on our website: http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Consultations currently in progress for the Department for Transport and its Executive Agencies

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Department for Transport website address: http://www.dft.gov.uk		
Taxis and private hire vehicles—consultation on draft Best Practice Guidance	2 August 2005	28 October 2005
UK Regulatory Requirements to Foreign Registered Aircraft	1 August 2005	28 October 2005
Guidance to local authorities seeking DfT funding for transport Major Schemes	1 April 2005	The original deadline for this was the 30 September 2005. This was extended to 31 October 2005. A further extension will be given to coincide with the closure of the forthcoming consultation on preparatory costs for major schemes.
Rail Interoperability Regulations and the interface with rail safety legislation[1]	3 October 2005	15 November 2005
Consultation on implementation of the Bunkers Convention	2 September 2005	25 November 2005

Consultations currently in progress for the Department for Transport and its Executive Agencies

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Proposal for a regulation on public passenger transport services by rail and by road	21 October 2005	13 January 2006
Highways Agency website address: http://www.highways.gov.uk		
Revision of Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual	1 October 2005	31 December 2005
Maritime and Coastguard Agency website address: http://www.mcga.gov.uk		
Yacht Deck Officer Certificates	12 August 2005	4 November 2005
Destination of Vessel Traffic Services in the UK	12 October 2005	9 January 2006
Noise and Vibration	19 October 2005	16 January 2006

The following Agencies do not have any consultations in progress at the moment:
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
Driving Standards Agency (DSA)
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency
Vehicle Certification Agency

[1] This consultation is shorter than the standard 12 weeks required by the code of practice on consultation because it was a follow up to an earlier consultation which lasted 12 weeks.

DVLA

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to require Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency driving assessment centres to make available a copy of the assessment report to those drivers who are being assessed as a result of a disability; and if he will make a statement. [20875]

Dr. Ladyman: Provision exists for the driver to request from DVLA a copy of any driving assessment report or other medical reports that may be held on their personal record. DVLA considers such requests in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Copies of assessment reports would, normally, be released.

Milton Keynes

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23508]

Ms Buck: The funding provided to Milton Keynes council for local transport capital expenditure since 2001 is shown in the table.

Milton Keynes council

£ million

	Capital maintenance	*Integrated block*	*Total*
2001–02	2.069	1.6	3.669
2002–03	2.194	1.601	3.795
2003–04	1.645	1.51	3.155
2004–05	1.92	1.555	3.475
2005–06	2.069	1.599	3.668

Capital maintenance funding is allocated to local highways authorities for investment in their highway network, including its structures and street lighting. The integrated transport block is Government funding support for transport improvements schemes each costing less than £5 million and can be used for local highways or public transport capital projects. It has been for Milton Keynes council to determine how these allocations were spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Revenue funding paid by my Department to Milton Keynes council in the form of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding, since 2001 is shown in the following table:

Bus grant paid to Milton Keynes council

	£ million
2001–02	0.29
2002–03	0.104
2003–04	0.106
2004–05	0.113
2005–06	0.117

The Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides further revenue funding for highway maintenance, concessionary fairs and subsidising bus services. However, RSG is unhypothecated and may be applied by local authorities to any services.

Railways

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many carriages are used by the rail networks in the UK. [23028]

Derek Twigg: The number of carriages in use for regular passenger service on the main line railway network is approximately 10,800. This excludes those in use by heritage railways and heritage stock kept for occasional use on the main line network.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway personnel were assaulted at work in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many arrests ensued; and how many convictions followed. [23128]

Derek Twigg: The number of crimes recorded by the British Transport police (BTP) for railway staff being assaulted while on duty totalled 2,879 during the period from 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005. These resulted in 516 arrests.

Information on the number of convictions can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many suicides occurred on the railway in 2004; and if he will make a statement on the counselling offered to drivers. [23027]

Derek Twigg: The British Transport Police publishes suicide figures by financial year. The total number of official verdicts of suicide on the railway network in England and Wales was 95 for the period from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

Counselling is routinely offered to train drivers and rail staff in the aftermath of a railway suicide. Each train operating company is required to have provisions in place for the care of its staff under both Health and Safety and Employment rules.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what types of material are used to maintain the railway infrastructure; how much of each type was used in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [22832]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail.

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider building a train station in Wellington in Somerset on the Paddington-Penzance line. [23203]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport is aware of the long held aspiration for the reopening of Wellington station and the inclusion of the proposed station in the Somerset County Council Local Transport Plan 2001–06. The case for a station needs further investigation including the development of an initial business case and assessments of its technical and operational deliverability. Such assessment and development work will need to be carried out with Network Rail. Funding sources will also need to be considered.

Road Bypasses/Usage

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list constituencies in which road bypasses have been built since May 1997. [22834]

Dr. Ladyman: A table has been placed in the Libraries of the House showing which road bypasses have been built since May 1997 and the constituencies where they are located. This includes both Highways Agency and local authority schemes.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the total kilometres travelled by private motor vehicle users on roads in England and Wales in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1994 and *(c)* 2004. [23354]

Dr. Ladyman: The total kilometres travelled by private motor vehicle users (comprising cars, vans, motorcycles/mopeds and taxis) on roads in England and Wales is estimated as *(a)* 396 billion kilometres in 1984, *(b)* 561 billion kilometres in 1994 and *(c)* 619 billion kilometres in 2004.

Data for 1984 are not directly comparable with 1994 and 2004 due to methodological changes.

Sheffield Tram System

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the current status of plans to extend the Sheffield tram system into Rotherham; what costs have been estimated; what consultation has taken place with local *(a)* residents and *(b)* community groups; and what financial support his Department plans to supply. [22831]

Derek Twigg: In September 2004, the promoters of Sheffield Supertram, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE), submitted their proposals for extending the existing Supertram system.

The estimated capital costs set out in their proposals are £94 million for the Rotherham Parkgate and Royal Hallamshire Hospital loop extension and £89 million for the Rotherham Parkgate and Royal Hallamshire Hospital Spur extension. These costs are at 1992 prices.

The Government asked SYPTE for further work on the scheme's value for money before we can consider their bid for funding. The Department is awaiting the conclusions of this work.

SYPTE, as promoters of the scheme, are responsible for consulting residents and community groups on their proposals.

Speeding Fines

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many unpaid speeding fines in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire are owed by people who are not British citizens. [23451]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Information on the nationality of offenders who are given speeding fines is not collected centrally.

Train Numbers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* diesel and *(b)* electric trains operate in the UK. [23029]

Derek Twigg: The number of trains operating on the UK main line network is approximately as follows:

	Number
Diesel passenger trains	1,250
Electric passenger trains	1,740
Diesel freight locomotives	620
Electric freight locomotives	90

This excludes maintenance vehicles, trains in use by heritage railways and heritage trains kept for occasional use on the main line network.

Transport Accessibility

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the average time taken for residents in England to walk to their nearest *(a)* bus and *(b)* train station. [23755]

Ms Buck: Data from the National Travel Survey on the time taken to walk to the nearest bus stop and train station for households in England are provided in the following table:

	Percentage of households, England, 2004
Time taken to walk to nearest bus stop	
6 minutes or less	86
7 to 13 minutes	10
14 to 26 minutes	3
27 minutes or more	1
All households	100
Time taken to walk to nearest railway station	
6 minutes or less	6
7 to 13 minutes	11
14 to 26 minutes	25
27 minutes or more	58
All households	100

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Quality

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions have been made against local authorities who fail to meet their targets under air quality management areas in the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [21797]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the local air quality management system, there is no obligation on local authorities to meet the air quality objectives, as prescribed in regulations. Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 only requires local authorities to act "in pursuit of the achievement" of air quality objectives. This is because responsibility for action needed to regulate sources of emissions often lies outside their remit.

Under section 85 of the Environment Act 1995, the Secretary of State has reserve powers requiring English local authorities to take action where they are failing to make sufficient progress. The Secretary of State may issue directions to require local authorities to take any of the following steps:

Carry out an air quality review and assessment under section 82 of the Act;

Re-do an air quality review and assessment in whole or in part;

Make an order designating an air quality management area (AQMA);

Revoke or modify an AQMA order;

Prepare an action plan;

Modify any action plan;

Implement any actions in an action plan; and

Exercise powers in pursuit of the air quality objectives.

These reserve powers have never been used, and are seen as a last resort, only to be used where local authorities have clearly failed to carry out their local air quality management duties.

All Government Departments, including mine, have agreed a "Memorandum of Understanding", to be found at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_local gov/documents/page/odpm_locgov_029528.hcsp which formalises arrangements for handling poorly performing local authorities following the introduction of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The memorandum encourages central Government to "engage" with local authorities to address performance issues, and intervene where performance is giving cause for concern. In the last five years, where authorities have been falling behind with their air quality duties, my officials have engaged with those authorities to learn more about why they are falling behind and provided support as necessary. My officials have also met with a number of authorities who have been delayed with their air quality review and assessment reports. Ministers have also written to a number of authorities requesting submission of late reports and answered a parliamentary question in May 2001 highlighting which authorities had failed to complete their air quality reviews and assessments at that stage.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many birds entered quarantine in each of the last six months; how many were tested for avian influenza; and how many *(a)* live birds and *(b)* dead birds tested positive for avian influenza. [22128]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 1 May 2005 and 21 Oct 2005 our records show that 12,354 captive birds were imported from countries outside of the EU. These figures do not include imports of poultry.

All imported captive birds are held in quarantine for 30 days. During this time tests are carried out for the avian influenza virus.

During this period we have only received confirmation of two positive tests, which have recently been detected, of the avian influenza virus.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms are being put in place to help farmers to check their poultry for avian influenza. [22863]

Mr. Bradshaw: A private veterinary surgeon should always be consulted when birds become ill and the cause cannot be identified. If avian influenza or Newcastle disease are suspected the divisional veterinary manager should be notified immediately.

Biosecurity advice has been distributed to industry partners, and signs of the disease can be found on the DEFRA website at: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contingency plans are in place to deal with a poultry farm which has been contaminated with avian influenza. [22864]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA has recently reviewed and updated its Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan following a period of public consultation. It includes a section dealing specifically with an outbreak of avian influenza and was laid before Parliament on 21 July

2005. It is available on the DEFRA website. In the event of avian influenza being confirmed on a poultry farm the plan would be invoked immediately.

The contingency plan is supported by operational and veterinary instructions that have also been published on the DEFRA website.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the quantity of poultry that may become infected in the event of an avian influenza outbreak; [22935]

(2) what estimate she has made of the quantity of poultry that will be killed through *(a)* infection and *(b)* controlled culling as a result of an avian influenza outbreak. [22936]

Mr. Bradshaw: The last outbreak in the UK was in 1992, and affected only one turkey shed. The outbreak in the Netherlands in 2003 involved the culling of millions of birds. Therefore we must be ready for all eventualities.

Our policy is to stamp out disease the moment it appears and to minimise the risk of the disease spreading to the maximum extent possible.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what scenarios the Government have developed contingency plans in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [22937]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government's Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan includes a section dealing specifically with an outbreak of avian influenza. The Government have recognised that it is also sensible to plan for a wide set of events, however unlikely these may be, and is, accordingly, developing additional plans.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are in place to check chickens for avian influenza. [22943]

Mr. Bradshaw: The existing legislation requires that any person who suspects that his chickens have avian influenza must immediately inform the local office of the State Veterinary Service and take steps to reduce the disease risk.

There is in addition an annual survey to monitor low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry flocks.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to vaccinate poultry against the AH5N1 strain of avian influenza. [23117]

Mr. Bradshaw: Prophylactic vaccination of poultry is prohibited under council directive 92/40/EC. There is no avian influenza with a current marketing authorisation in the UK.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with other countries regarding the devising of measures to prevent the spread of avian influenza among animals. [23267]

Mr. Bradshaw: My officials attended a series of meetings in Brussels last week, organised by the European Commission, to discuss issues on avian influenza (AI).

On 25 October the EU agreed to introduce an extensive ban on imports into the Community of wild birds, along with new restrictions on the import of pet birds. In line with previous EU-wide measures, we have already banned imports of all live birds and products which could potentially transmit the disease from countries with the H5N1 strains of avian influenza.

Bovine TB

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many outstanding tuberculosis tests for bovines there were in each year from 2000. [22939]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data was not collected centrally for overdue tests before January 2002. Data from 2002–05 is given in the following table.

Outstanding tuberculosis tests for bovines

	Number
2002	6,283
2003	3,623
2004	2,739
2005[1]	[2]2,049

[1] 1 January to 30 September.
[2] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database TB Data Warehouse and subject to change as more data becomes available later in the year.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of bovines untested for tuberculosis; and what steps are being taken to expedite tests. [22940]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 30 September 2005 there were 2,049 herds with outstanding tuberculin tests in Great Britain. Of these, 888 (43 per cent.) were less than one month overdue, 442 (21.6 per cent.) were overdue by 1–3 months, 299 (14.6 per cent.) were overdue by 3–6 months, 224 (10.9 per cent.) were 6–12 months overdue and 196 (9.6 per cent.) were more than 12 months overdue.

Last November we introduced a number of measures aimed at tightening surveillance and reducing the risk of TB spreading to new areas. The recalculation of routine testing intervals will ensure TB testing complies with Commission legislation while offering robust protection. Livestock movement restrictions are now imposed immediately a herd's routine test becomes overdue and a more rigorous and systematic approach to identifying and dealing with potential new TB hot spots is in place. In addition to this, rigorous testing schedules for new and reformed herds have been introduced.

British Beef

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many countries import British beef; and how many maintain a ban on British beef. [22165]

Mr. Bradshaw: According to our latest information: 91 countries permit the import of beef from the UK; 85 countries do not permit the import of beef from the UK; and for 27 other countries the situation is not known.

Cattle Imports (Brazil)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ban imports of beef from Brazil while the country's cattle are suffering from foot and mouth disease. [23182]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 13 October 2005, in line with EU action, the UK banned imports of bovine meat from the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Parana and Sao Paulo in Brazil due to the foot and mouth outbreak in Mato Grosso do Sul.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish figures for the percentage of the EU budget accounted for by the Common Agricultural Policy for each year from 1984 to 2013. [21265]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The following table refers to payments under the Common Agricultural Policy, or payments under the Guarantee section of EAGGF for earlier years.

Total expenditure EU Budget

	Units: ecu/euro million	*Percentage*
1984	18,330	67.7
1985	19,728	70.8
1986	22,118	63.8
1987	22,950	65.4
1988	26,395	64.3
1989	24,401	59.9
1990	25,605	58.1
1991	31,103	58.1
1992	31,255	53.4
1993	34,936	53.9
1994	32,953	55.6
1995	34,490	51.8
1996	39,324	51.0
1997	40,423	50.6
1998	39,068	48.3
1999	39,469	47.3
2000[1]	40,506	49.6
2001[1]	41,534	52.6
2002[1]	43,521	49.8
2003[1]	44,379	49.0
2004[1]	43,579	43.5
2005[2]	49,115	46.2

Note:
All figures concern payments; 2000–05 figures include Rural Development. Figures relate to outturn, apart from 2005 (adopted Budget).
Source:
(Commission documents):
The Community Budget: the facts in figures
[1] Financial Reports 2000–2004
[2] The 2005 Budget in figures

Financial framework 2007–13

These figures are commission estimates for 2007–13 and will depend on the outcome of the future finance negotiations.

(2004 prices/euro million)—global appropriations for commitments

	CAP and RD	*Percentage*
2006	54,279	45.3
2007	55,259	41.76
2008	55,908	40.6
2009	56,054	39.5
2010	55,859	38.4
2011	55,666	37.4
2012	55,583	36.3
2013	55,498	35.3

Source:
Working document of the Commission Services (1 October 2004)

Cross-compliance Regimes

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the operation of cross compliance regimes; and if she will make a statement. [20412]

Jim Knight: The Department has received one letter from a member of the public expressing concern about the implementation and operation of cross compliance.

In this first year of operating the cross compliance regime I am aware of the need to understand how the application of the new rules is working in practice. To this end we have put in place a variety of monitoring mechanisms. These include feedback via the consultancy firm running the cross compliance advice service, discussions with farming representatives, informal consultation on the update to the handbook with approximately one hundred stakeholders, as well as views of the inspecting bodies.

In other parts of the UK, the implementation and operation of cross compliance is a matter for the devolved Administrations and any representations will be made directly to them.

Dangerous Dogs Act

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average length of time is that dogs have been held under the provisions of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. [23093]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on the average duration for dogs held under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 is held by individual police forces and not collected centrally.

Departmental Priorities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what priorities the Department has set for 2006–07. [21701]

Jim Knight *[holding answer given 27 October 2005]:* DEFRA's priorities are set out in its Five-Year Strategy, "Delivering the Essentials of Life", published in December 2004. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to her Department. [21007]

Jim Knight: Defra uses a competency-based approach to recruitment and selects candidates against both the Defra competences and the specific requirements for the job, using application form and interview.

Once people are in post the primary mechanism for highlighting their skills or competence gaps is the formal performance and developmental discussions that take place between staff and their managers during the year. DEFRA then have a range of learning solutions and developmental initiatives to help people to develop the competences and specific job related skills they require.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of her Department. [21113]

Jim Knight: DEFRA is committed to the development of its staff and recognises the importance of key skills, such as numeracy and literacy, in the workplace. Literacy skills are embedded into the various writing skills courses we run and numeracy skills form a key part of training in subjects such as finance.

DEFRA also ensures its employees can obtain learning and development solutions to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills in a number of other ways. For example our Departmental Central Learning Aid Scheme (CLAS) offers 100 per cent. funding to members of staff who wish to do a GCSE level qualification for numeracy, literacy or another key skill area.

We have recently supported employees for whom English is not their first language by funding them on 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) courses. Delegates can take nationally recognised tests at two levels, the higher of which is the equivalent of a GCSE pass at grade A-C. Additionally DEFRA is currently promoting apprenticeships within the Department, which contain specific modules on raising the numeracy and literacy skills of participants.

Diversification

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress being made in the farming industry on diversification. [23135]

Jim Knight: DEFRA's 2003–04 Farm Business Survey reported that 48 per cent. of farmers in England had diversified, with a further 24 per cent. undertaking off farm employment. Turnover from diversification rose from £425 million in 2002–03 to £550 million in 2003–04. Total income from farm diversification activities in England in 2003–04 was almost £300 million.

DEFRA's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food identifies the opportunities that farm diversification can offer to farmers looking for new markets and new sources of income. Diversification activities can not only improve the economic viability of the farming enterprise, but can also bring benefits to the wider rural population and economy. The Strategy particularly identifies the assistance available through DEFRA's England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) to help farmers with their diversification plans. Funding is available for farmers diversifying into a wide range of alternative agricultural and non-agricultural activities.

Dog Trainers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who has won the bid to conduct research into electric aids used for dog training; and whether the research will be conducted independently of the manufacturers of such devices. [23176]

Mr. Bradshaw: An open competition call inviting bids for research into specific types of electronic training aids was published in DEFRA's annual Research Requirements Document on 1 August 2005.

The closing date for receipt of proposals was 30 September 2005. A single proposal was received in response to the call and this is currently undergoing both external and internal peer review. It is hoped that a decision will be made by the end of December on whether or not DEFRA will proceed with the commissioning of this proposal, in line with the timetable outlined in the Research Requirements Document.

It is important that the research is independent, robust and rigorous. Peer review at both the outset and during the life of the project will help ensure this process.

Energy Efficiency

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what resources are available from public sources to promote energy efficiency locally. [22682]

Mr. Morley: The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all UK local authorities with housing responsibilities to prepare and publish an energy conservation report identifying practicable and cost-effective measures likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their area; and to report on progress in implementing the measures.

The Government-funded Energy Saving Trust (EST) assists local authorities to deliver their HECA and other energy responsibilities through initiatives such as the Local Energy Support Programme. The EST also runs the Practical Help service to provide assistance and advice on implementing environmental policies including sustainable energy policy to local authorities and housing associations. The Home Energy Conservation Association (UK HECA) currently receives funding from the EST to run a network which helps local authorities share their expertise and resources in order to deliver their HECA strategies more effectively.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to encourage local authorities to improve energy efficiency in their housing stock, with particular reference to Gravesham. [22731]

Mr. Morley: The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) requires all UK local authorities with housing responsibilities to prepare and publish an energy conservation report identifying practicable and

cost-effective measures likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of all residential accommodation in their area; and to report on progress in implementing the measures.

Under the Government's Decent Homes standard all social housing in England is required to have efficient heating and effective insulation by 2010. My understanding is that Gravesham borough council are currently considering transferring their housing stock under Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) in order to help deliver this. They are receiving support from the Government-funded Energy Saving Trust (EST) "Local Support" initiative. This is an enhanced energy efficiency advice service that delivers bespoke support to local authorities to tackle climate change, including energy efficiency under LSVT of social housing.

Environment Council

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how climate change mitigation policies developed by the National Assembly for Wales were represented in the deliberation of European Union environment ministers at the EU Environment Council on 17 to 18 October. [20977]

Mr. Morley: I represented UK at the recent EU Environment Council; Margaret Beckett chaired the meeting for the UK presidency. The Council focused on the EU's negotiating strategy for the upcoming Montreal climate change conference.

The EU agreed that its priority for the Montreal conference should be to operationalise the Kyoto Protocol. The Council confirmed its determination to meet its commitments under the UN Framework Convention and Protocol, including on funding to assist developing countries. The EU also set an objective to launch discussions on a process to determine further action after the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period.

A section on climate change policies by the National Assembly for Wales will appear in the revised UK Climate Change Programme which we are aiming to publish before the end of the year. This will contribute to the 2010 carbon dioxide goal and longer term goals. The UK has also worked closely with all the Devolved Administrations to ensure implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in a consistent and appropriate manner.

Environmental Schemes (Farmers)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress made on the introduction of environmental schemes for farmers. [23165]

Jim Knight: Since the launch of Environmental Stewardship in March this year, steady progress has been made. The first Entry Level and Organic Entry Level Stewardship agreements started on 1 August and now over 7,500 of them are in place, covering over 830,000 hectares of English countryside. Another 500,000 hectares are in the pipeline. Although there have been initial difficulties with IT and registration of land, contingency arrangements in place ensured that we could meet our commitment to a 1 August start date for agreements.

Continuing IT difficulties have meant that progress with Higher Level Stewardship has been slower than planned. However, new Higher Level Stewardship agreements are expected to be available early in 2006. In recognition of this delay, agri-environment customers whose existing agreements are coming to an end are being offered an extension to their agreement subject to entry into Environmental Stewardship, thereby protecting previously funded environmental benefits.

EU Sugar Regime

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received from food manufacturers about the proposed changes to the EU sugar regime. [19064]

Jim Knight: Meetings to discuss the proposed reforms to the EU sugar regime have taken place at both ministerial and official level with several individual companies and with the following trade associations: the Food and Drink Federation, the Biscuit Cake Chocolate and Confectionary Association, the UK Industrial Sugar Users Group and the British Soft Drink Association. In general terms those using sugar as an ingredient favour a market-based approach to reform, with early and substantial price cuts and increased competition.

Defra ministers have also received letters on this subject from a range of individual food and drink manufacturers in recent months, both before and as part of our recently concluded consultation exercise. A summary of that consultation will be published shortly.

Exotic Wild Birds

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the level of black market trading of exotic wild birds in the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [22289]

Jim Knight: The global wildlife trade is huge, with an annual turnover estimated at billions of dollars and involving hundreds of millions of individual plants and animals. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates international trade through a system of certificates and permits.

A great deal of wildlife trade is legal and likely to be conducted at sustainable levels that do not adversely affect the conservation status of the species in the wild. But some of the trade is illegal or unsustainable. Birds are subject to high levels of crime, especially birds of prey and parrots. In recent years an increasing number of parrots have been seized in new member states to the EU, including some rare and strictly protected species.

A growing number of laws and regulations are now in place in order to control the trade to ensure its sustainability, to protect endangered species and to tackle the illegal trade.

However, both legal and illegal traders also adapt quickly to changing laws and markets—targeting new species when others become depleted, shifting to new markets or, in the case of illegal trade, developing new smuggling methods and routes to avoid detection.

I recently attended an EU-wide workshop, hosted by the Department which brought together police, customs, environmental inspectors and CITES officials to enhance co-ordination, co-operation and information exchange between member states on the enforcement of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with other EU member states on tackling the illegal trade in exotic wild birds. [22290]

Jim Knight: The Department hosted a three-day EU Wildlife Trade Enforcement Co-ordination Workshop at Chesham in Buckinghamshire from 25–27 October 2005. This initiative, held as part of the UK's presidency of the EU, brought together police, customs, environmental inspectors and other officials representing all 25 member states to improve wildlife law enforcement co-ordination and information exchange.

The workshop participants agreed a set of recommendations and an outline action plan intended to enhance co-operation between EU member states on the enforcement of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation, which implements the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) within the EU. The UK also called for extra vigilance for signs of any illegal trade or movement of birds.

I shall be sending the workshop outcomes to my counterparts in all EU member states, and I have asked for the recommendations to be discussed at the next meeting of the EC CITES Enforcement Working Group on 10 November 2005 in Brussels.

Farming

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average yearly farm income was from 1984 to 2005. [21266]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The average yearly farm income for England in each year from 1983–84 to 2003–04 is given in the following table (2004–05 due to be published 27 October):

Average net farm incomes in England (£/farm) [1]

£

March/February	*England farm*
1983–84	12,500
1984–85	14,000
1985–86	7,700
1986–87	11,600
1987–88	11,900
1988–89	12,600
1989–90	17,500
1990–91	16,700
1991–92	18,000
1992–93	22,100
1993–94	23,800
1994–95	28,800
1995–96	38,200
1996–97	31,700
1997–98	15,200
1998–99	11,500
1999–2000	8,700
2000–01	10,600
2001–02 [2]	14,900
2002–03	16,600
2003–04	30,200

[1] The data may differ slightly from those published in past years. They have been re-calculated to take account of changes to farm typology.

[2] Excludes farms subjected to compulsory foot and mouth disease cull. Net farm income is defined as the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant type capital invested in the business.

Source:
Farm Business Survey

Flood Protection

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the forthcoming strategy for the Lower Severn includes statements on the Environment Agency's responsibility to undertake planned and responsive maintenance on the banks of the River Severn. [22495]

Mr. Morley: I understand the Tidal Severn Strategy has been developed by the Environment Agency in full consultation with stakeholders and that it does include statements on the Agency's responsibilities to undertake planned and responsive maintenance on the banks of the River Severn.

Goats

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the impact on the welfare of goats of *(a)* single tagging and *(b)* double tagging; and if she will make a statement. [21216]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA has conducted a six-month field trial in order to identify potential welfare issues when tagging goats. The trial involved double tagging 125 goats with a range of different tag types. This was done to maximise the data available and the trial was not specifically designed to compare the welfare implications of single versus double tagging. In any event, the results of the trial are currently being been analysed.

The Department have also conducted research on best practice in tagging goats within the UK and in other EU member states. The critical success factors appear to be use of an appropriate tag (size, shape, weight, pin length, etc.) for the breed of animal, the correct placement and application of the tag and high standards of hygiene. The environment in which animals are kept is also factor determining retention rates, which have an impact on animal welfare.

Although DEFRA is concerned about the possible welfare impact of the mandatory tagging of goats, my officials have uncovered numerous examples of keepers who have encountered few or no welfare problems when

tagging their goats. It should also be noted that the application of tattoos, the former favoured method of identifying goats, can also cause welfare problems.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department plans to administer European Council regulation (EC) 21/2004, regarding the identification of sheep and goats. [21217]

Mr. Bradshaw: Council Regulation (EC) 21/2004 has been directly applicable within the United Kingdom from 9 July 2005. Domestic legislation to provide for the enforcement of the requirements of 21/2004 will be in place by December.

The UK sought an exemption from the requirement in Council Regulation (EC) 21/2004 for all breeding sheep and goats to be double tagged. This has been granted on a temporary basis up until 30 April 2006. This allows the UK to broadly maintain its existing system.

A leaflet explaining the new rules in brief was sent to all sheep and goat keepers in England on 25 August. I will place a copy of this leaflet in the Library of the House. Full guidance will be sent to all sheep and goat keepers in November and once issued, this too will be made available in the Libraries.

Milk Prices

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with Farmers for Action on the price of milk paid to farmers. [17696]

Jim Knight: Price negotiations between producers and processors, or processors and supermarkets are a private commercial matter in which the Government cannot and should not get involved, provided competition rules are respected. The Government are very aware of the challenges facing the industry, of which low prices are one. My noble Friend Lord Bach, is working closely with industry representatives through the Dairy Supply Chain Forum to address some of these issues, such as farm level efficiency and barriers to innovation.

National Service Plan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress on the National Service Plan. [20761]

Mr. Bradshaw: I assume the hon. Member is referring to the National Scrapie Plan.

The National Scrapie Plan continues to make good progress. The voluntary Ram Genotyping Scheme is continuing to recruit new members and there has been encouraging progress in improving genotype profiles in participating flocks. We are working to implement the Compulsory Ram Genotyping Scheme during 2006, taking into account the results of a strategic review last year. Targeted action in scrapie affected flocks is continuing in line with the EU rules and we are taking the opportunity of discussions in Brussels of the Commission's TSE Roadmap to press for changes to the scheme.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list those of her Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish their response to advice from. [20128]

Jim Knight: There is currently no information held centrally to answer this question and to provide it would be at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20130]

Jim Knight: Not all the information required is held centrally and the following parts of this question have not been answered because of disproportionate cost:

(b) Conduct public consultation exercises

(c) Conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests

(d) Publish a register of members' interests.

Some of parts *(a)*, *(e)* and *(f)* can be answered, however there is currently no information held centrally on whether these bodies have a statutory base.

Most of the information was collected in the last quarter of 2004 and relates only to questions about publishing meeting agendas and minutes on the internet.

(a) Hold public meetings

Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances
Advisory Committee on Packaging
Advisory Committee on Pesticides
Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment
Committee of Radioactive Waste Management
Farm Animal Welfare Council
Independent Scientific Group on TB in Cattle
Pesticides Residues Committee
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Council
Veterinary Products Committee
Veterinary Residues Committee
Zoos Forum

(e) Publish agendas for meetings

Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances
Advisory Committee on Pesticides
Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment
Air Quality Expert Group
Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply
Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards
Independent Scientific Group on TB in Cattle
Pesticides Residues Committee
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Council

Veterinary Products Committee
Veterinary Residues Committee

(f) Publish the minutes of meetings

Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment
Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances
Advisory Committee on Organic Standards
Advisory Committee on Packaging
Advisory Committee on Pesticides
Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment
Air Quality Expert Group
Committee of Radioactive Waste Management
Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply
Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards
Expert Group on Cryptosporidium in Water Supplies
Farm Animal Welfare Council
Independent Scientific Group on TB in Cattle
Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council
Pesticides Residues Committee
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution
Science Advisory Council
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Council
Sustainable Development Commission
Veterinary Products Committee
Veterinary Residues Committee
Zoos Forum

Packaging Waste Regulations

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) for what reasons the consultation period for the 'Meeting the 2008 Directive Targets' regarding the packaging waste regulations was set at six weeks; [22479]

(2) what assessment she has made of whether the consultation on the packaging waste regulations complied with the code of practice on consultations; [22480]

(3) what reasons underlay the timetable for the consultation on the packaging waste regulations; [22868]

(4) what reasons underlay the proposals in the Department's 'Meeting the 2008 Directive Targets' consultation in relation to decision-making procedures on competence. [22869]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Cabinet Office's code of practice on consultations states that

> "a minimum 12 week consultation process is required during the development of policy".

It goes on to say

> "however, there will be exceptional circumstances that require a consultation period of less than 12 weeks".

The Government are aware that for businesses with obligations under the packaging regulations to be able to plan ahead, new targets need to be made public as soon as possible before the beginning of a new obligation year on 1 January. We are also aware of the need to make changes to the legislation before the House rises in December if the legal provisions are to be in place by 1 January. Ensuring that this timing is met has been the Government's prime objective this year. In addition to consulting on changes to the regulations, the Government are in the process of consolidating the original 1997 regulations with the subsequent amendments. It was clear that if we had consulted for 12 weeks, we would have jeopardised our ability to announce new targets and other changes and make new regulations before the start of the next obligation year. The Government therefore consulted members of the Advisory Committee on Packaging, the industry body which represents packaging industry views to Government. They recognised the problem and agreed that the main objective was to get the changes announced as early as possible and the changes in place. For these reasons, we consulted for six weeks

The proposals on conditional approval and scrutinising scheme operational plans were put forward because discussions with industry suggested that compliance schemes and large producers may not at present be placing sufficient focus on meeting the 2008 directive targets and on the planning and action that they need to take now in order to do so. The changes put forward were therefore designed to shift the focus onto the 2008 directive targets.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms the Government plan to put in place to scrutinise operational plans of compliance schemes and large producers with regard to the new packaging waste regulations. [22481]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government proposed in the "Consultation Paper on Meeting Directive Targets in 2008" published earlier this year, to apply an additional level of resource to the scrutiny of compliance schemes' and large producers' operational plans, over and above that which the agency is currently and will continue to be, required to do.

This proposal was widely supported by those consulted and so the Government have commissioned consultants to build an IT based scrutiny system which, together with a qualitative assessment, will allow the operational plans to be considered in terms of their ability to meet the next packaging directive targets, both individually and in aggregate. The Government believe that the additional scrutiny is necessary to ensure a longer term focus on the actions producers and schemes will have to take to ensure that their compliance allows the UK to meet its directive targets in 2008.

Plastic Bags

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to reduce the use of disposable plastic bags; and if she will make a statement. [23291]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government recognizes the benefits of reducing the number of plastic bags used.

The number of single-use plastic bags in circulation could be significantly reduced through reuse and recycling, so we have asked the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to investigate the feasibility of a large scale campaign to encourage consumers to use strong, re-usable plastic bags in place of single-use bags. WRAP are currently trialling such a campaign in Bristol and Edinburgh, in association with national retailers, the

Scottish Executive, the British Retail Consortium and the Scottish Waste Awareness Group. Approximately 35 to 40 retail major outlets in each town are taking part in these trials. Results are expected in January.

Life cycle analysis studies suggest that re-using such bags several times (between four and seven times as a minimum, depending on the study) will produce environmental benefits, when compared to the use of single-trip alternatives such as plastic carrier bags, paper bags and biodegradable bags.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from her Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20127]

Jim Knight: The information requested is not collected.

Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on rebranding in her Department and related agencies since 2003–04. [18409]

Jim Knight: Expenditure incurred on re-branding Defra and its related agencies since 2003–04, managed by DEFRA's Communications Directorate, was £184,000.

This is broken down as follows:

Agency	*Expenditure incurred (£000)*
DEFRA	100
Related Agencies Rural Development Service	1
Government Decontamination Service	7
Marine Fisheries Agency	12
State Veterinary Service	64

Renewable Energy

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she will take to increase the use of energy-from-waste plants in the UK. [22262]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are exploring options to support the delivery of additional energy generation from residual, post-recycling, waste as part of its current review of waste strategy.

Rights of Way

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons confidentiality is retained by those who suggest a right of way under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [22487]

Jim Knight: Applications for rights of way are made under schedule 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Within the legislation there is no statutory protection for the confidentiality of applicants, and where a local authority subsequently makes an order, it must make available all the relevant documents for inspection. The release of personal information in relation to an application is determined by a local authority in accordance with its policy on the Data Protection Act.

Sunflowers

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to encourage farmers to grow selectively bred sunflowers that produce high oleic oil as a part of their diversification programme. [21562]

Jim Knight: The Department is aware of interest in high oleic oil crops . A very small area (200 hectares) of sunflowers is currently grown in the UK for non-food uses, but due to climatic restrictions, they are not currently suited to wide scale production in the UK. Similar high oleic oil traits, with their potential positive health and industrial oil benefits can be found in oilseed rape cultivars and these may prove to be a more suitable route for UK farmers to access these potential new markets. The National Non-Food Crops Centre (NNFCC) is an authoritative source of information on the use and implementation of non-food crop products and technologies and can provide farmers with advice.

Supermarkets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had regarding the code of practice for supermarkets; and if she will make a statement. [20411]

Jim Knight: Responsibility for the code of practice rests with the Office of Fair Trading. However, as DEFRA is the sponsor Department for the farming and food industries the subject of the code will have arisen in the course of discussions and correspondence between DEFRA and representatives of various bodies, including farming and retail organisations. We have also discussed the code with the Department for Trade and Industry and the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) as and when the need has arisen, most recently in the context of the OFT's August 2005 report "Supermarkets: the Code of Practice and Other Competition Issues".

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Alcohol Education

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has made to *(a)* the Department for Health and *(b)* the Treasury to secure greater funding for alcohol education; and if she will make a statement. [21132]

James Purnell *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* I have made no representations, as my Department plays an active role with others in carrying forward the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, led by the

Department of Health and the Home Office, which includes initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the harm caused by alcohol misuse.

You may also be aware that I am reviewing the Alcohol Education Research Council (AERC). The review will consider how best to support and develop the role currently played by the AERC and the fund which it manages.

British Museum Act

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore) of 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 235–36W, on the British Museum Act, what progress has been made in the consideration of the recommendation; and if she will make a statement. [21480]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is planning to issue a public consultation document on these matters shortly, with a view to submitting proposals for legislation in due course. We are now holding preliminary discussions with interested parties on the scope of possible legislation.

Child Obesity

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking towards its targets for reducing obesity among children under the age of 11 by 2010; and if she will make a statement. [21483]

Mr. Caborn: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target, to halt the rise in obesity in under-11s by 2010, is also shared by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) and there are a number of major cross-Government programmes which will contribute to the target.

The Department is working with the DH and DFES on the development of a cross-Government social marketing programme to address healthy lifestyles and will focus on children aged 2–10. The campaign is due to be launched in June 2006.

DCMS also has a joint target with DFES to ensure that by 2010 all children aged 5–16 will be offered at least four hours of sport every week, which will comprise two hours of high quality PE and sport at school and in addition the opportunity for a further 2–3 hours beyond the school day.

We are also looking at how we can increase the participation of dance by young people in and outside of school so that it can contribute to the PSA target and the Government's healthy living agenda.

We have also set up a cross-departmental group to devise a more strategic approach to play policy. Added to that the Big Lottery Fund announced on 31 March that one of its new funding programmes would include £155 million to develop, create, improve and design innovative children's play facilities with the aim of providing free local play provision for youngsters.

As well as the play programme, £350 million in England will be dedicated to helping communities to improve their local environment with £90 million of that amount for parks. This area of funding will be run in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Cricket

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to work with the Department for Education and Skills to promote cricket within schools. [23957]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills share a joint public service agreement target to increase participation in physical education and sport in schools as part of the national PE and school sport strategy. This includes competitive team games such as cricket.

Cricket may be taught to pupils in schools as part of the programme of study for games activities within national curriculum PE. Games activities must be taught to all pupils in key stages 1–3 (age 5–14) and are optional at key stage 4 (age 14–16).

Cricket is one of the 22 key sports within the Club Links work strand of the school sport strategy. This work strand seeks to enhance existing links, and create new links, between schools and sports clubs. It is intended to help increase the number of school children being guided into National Governing Body affiliated sports clubs.

The 2004–05 PE and School Sport Survey of schools in School Sport Partnerships found that cricket was the second most popular sport (after football) for which schools had formal links with sports clubs. 46 per cent. of schools have links with a local cricket club. The survey also found that 85 per cent. of schools provided cricket for their pupils, either in lesson time or after school. This was the sixth most popular sport provided in schools. Copies of the results of the survey have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Appointments (Diversity)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* disabled and *(b)* ethnic minority staff were appointed to the Department in the last financial year; and if she will make a statement. [21466]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is fully committed to equality of opportunity, and recruitment and selection takes place on the basis of fair and open competition.

Data on ethnicity and disability are collected on a voluntary self-declaration basis. In the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, of 110 appointments, two people declared a disability and 15 people declared themselves to be from an ethnic minority background; some people chose not to declare their ethnicity or disability status.

Departmental Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many call centres were run by her Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04,

(b) 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23307]

Mr. Lammy: My Department and its one executive agency, the Royal Parks, do not run any call centres.

Departmental Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what steps she is taking to improve her Department's performance with regard to replying to correspondence from the public; and if she will make a statement; [21467]

(2) what steps she is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21916]

Mr. Lammy: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence is published on an annual basis. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS.

DCMS is also setting up a new Central Information and Briefing Unit, which will help ensure that replies to correspondence from the public are dealt with in a prompt, accurate and helpful manner.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency, the effects in Gateshead, East and Washington, West of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [22284]

Mr. Lammy: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Gateshead, East and Washington, West since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in over 4,000 new and refurbished public sports facilities nationwide. Sports facilities in the Gateshead and Sunderland area have benefited from 42 awards from Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund to the total of £19.7 million.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £412 million in 2005–06. Between 1998–99 and 2005–06 funding to Arts Council England, North East increased from £5.7 million to £14.4 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the North East, including grant-in-aid and lottery expenditure, will be £17.7 million. Gateshead, East and Washington, West has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals in the areas, ranging from the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art to the Gateshead NHS Trust which received £30,000 from public art commissions for the new NHS treatment centre in Gateshead.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Gateshead, East and Washington, West will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Gateshead, East and Washington, West with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2004–05 was 4,560.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Act 2005 will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be

able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Gateshead, East and Washington, West, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Gateshead, East and Washington, West has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity, primarily £50 million in grant-in-aid per annum to VisitBritain. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the regional development agencies, including One North East. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Gateshead, East and Washington, West.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £40,875 to Gateshead, East and Washington, West since 2 May 1997. The sum represents a single grant made to the Bowes railway Engineering Company near Gateshead.

In 2002 the Department, working through the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, began investing in regional museums for the first time with the Renaissance funding programme. Since 2003, the North East Regional Museums Hub, led by Tyne and Wear Museums, working in partnership with the North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (NEMLAC) has invested £4.7 million in museums in the north east. As a result, 88 per cent. of schools in Gateshead LEA, and 68 per cent. in Sunderland LEA have participated in museum based learning at Tyne and Wear museums. And since April 2005, museum hub outreach officers in Gateshead and Sunderland have worked with 2,073 people, including partnering with lads and dada groups, women's mental health groups and disaffected young people.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches under the administration of Gateshead and Sunderland councils within Gateshead, East and Washington, West are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community value of public libraries. Gateshead council has gained two awards through the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 1997–98 (£65,000 towards a total project cost of £130,000) and 2000–01 (£23,605 towards a total project cost of £34,688).

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Gateshead, East and Washington, West has benefited from over 235 awards totalling over £8.9 million. Of these, 49 awards worth over £6 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23476]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, via the Government Art Collection (part of the Department), spent £295,500 on works of art in the 2004–05 Financial Year.

Departmental Sponsorship

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list formal consultations being sponsored by her Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22563]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is sponsoring the following current formal consultations:

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Commission proposal for the 'Citizen's for Europe' Programme-2007–2013	5 August 2005	28 October 2005
The 1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols of 1954 and 1999	6 September 2005	2 December 2005
European Commission's Communication i2010: Digital Libraries	24 October 2005	13 January 2006

There are no current formal consultations being carried out at the Royal Parks Agency.

Digital Switchover

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the cost of the subsidy scheme for digital switchover; and if she will make a statement. [22774]

James Purnell: We need to await the conclusions of the pilot switchover assistance scheme project in Bolton and research, which we will shortly commission, on the future intentions among the target groups to adopt digital television and to use the services provided under the scheme before we can publish detailed estimates. We will not have the results of these studies until early next year.

We hope to publish estimates of the costs of the switchover assistance scheme in spring 2006.

Drinks Pricing

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued

to local authorities regarding the legality of policies on the minimum pricing of alcohol drinks; and if she will make a statement. [21378]

James Purnell *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Chapter 7.79 of the guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 offers advice on discounting and sales promotions, including advice on competition law in relation to pricing.

The Government are committed to an early review of the guidance, which was issued over a year ago. It would be sensible to look again at the advice on discounting and sales promotions, and I would value the hon. Member's views as part of that process.

English Cathedrals

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the implications for the maintenance of the fabric of English cathedrals of the loss of income arising from forced sale to their tenants of rented houses in their closes. [23600]

Mr. Lammy: No specific assessment of this aspect of Cathedrals' financial circumstances has been made. However, the 2001 English Heritage survey of the fabric needs of cathedrals demonstrated that most had overcome the backlog of repairs that had existed in 1991 when the survey had last been carried out. The remaining need is for smaller grants for medium sized cyclical repairs. In 2005–06, the scheme is providing £1 million to assist cathedrals with their outstanding repair needs.

Cathedrals have received a total of £7.7 million since 2001–02 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This money has supported fabric repair and conservation work, new facilities, and community outreach projects.

Cathedrals are also major beneficiaries of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme whereby grants are awarded in respect of the VAT incurred in repairing listed places of worship.

Funding (Milton Keynes)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding was allocated by her Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23504]

Mr. Lammy: Apart from the national museums and galleries, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not allocate funding directly to any of its sectors. Instead money allocated to it by Parliament is channelled through our various non-departmental public bodies who are responsible for deciding how and where it is spent. For instance the Arts Council has allocated £1.45 million to a number of organisations in Milton Keynes over the last five years, as well as £20 million in capital for the Milton Keynes Theatre and Art Gallery. Similarly Sport England have allocated £800,000 in revenue and £1 million in capital funding and English Heritage £251,000 in revenue funding. Some of the funding which these and other of our NDPBs spend in the surrounding area will also have benefited Milton Keynes.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21295]

Mr. Lammy: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the Departmental Annual Report. Further progress will be reported in the Autumn Performance Report and at aggregate level in the Pre-Budget Report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21319]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's Efficiency programme.

Heritage Protection Review

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department will implement the recommendations of the Heritage Protection Review. [23669]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS intends to publish a White Paper that will contain the detailed proposals for reform of the heritage protection system in spring 2006. The Department will seek parliamentary time for new legislation as soon as practicable after this time.

Irresponsible Drinks Promotions

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent meetings she has held with representatives of *(a)* supermarkets, *(b)* off-licences and *(c)* other licensed premises with regard to irresponsible drinks promotions; and if she will make a statement. [21376]

James Purnell: I and my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State, and the Home Secretary, met senior figures from the off-trade on 26 October to discuss the sale of alcohol to children. We shall be having further discussions on the issue of irresponsible sales promotions.

There are ongoing and regular meetings between my Department, the Home Office and the Department of Health with the licensed trade to discuss issues such as responsible retailing. An important development in this regard, as part of the cross-Government Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, is the drawing up of a Social Responsibility Standards Code. Representatives of all licensed trade sectors are committed to the code, which will be launched shortly.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many IT projects have been developed for her Department since 2001; and whether she has agreed to make public the Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23513]

Mr. Lammy: There is no central list of IT projects developed for the Department since 2001, but the number is approximately 20 in total.

In line with Office of Government Commerce (OGC) guidelines we do not publish Gateway Review reports.

Libraries

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total stock was of books owned by each London borough's library service in each year since 1997. [23478]

Mr. Lammy: The total book stock held by public libraries across inner and outer London for each year between 1997–98 and 2003–04 is shown in the table. These figures are drawn from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's annual Public Library Statistics (Actuals) which also contain figures for individual library authorities. Copies are kept in the House of Commons Library.

	Total book stock
1997–98	18,224,226
1998–99	17,710,718
1999–2000	17,724,161
2000–01	16,724,524
2001–02	16,652,961
2002–03	16,162,081
2003–04	15,573,734

Licensing

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many representations she has received from police authorities raising concerns about the effects of the Licensing Act 2003 since the Act passed; and if she will make a statement. [21088]

James Purnell: Since the passing of the Licensing Act 2003, my Department has received many representations from the police raising issues relating to the likely effects of the Act. The police have provided frequent and valuable advice to the Government, in particular, in the development of the guidance to police officers on the operation of closure powers in the Act.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to local authorities on the circumstances in which they should write to residents to inform them of applications for premises licences under the Licensing Act 2003. [21456]

James Purnell: Requirements aimed at bringing licence applications to the attention of interested parties likely to be affected by them are not matters of guidance but of primary and secondary legislation. Under the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licences and Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 (2005 No. 42), applicants are required to display a notice prominently at or on the premises and to advertise their application in a local newspaper or newsletter. The 2003 Act also requires that licensing authorities must place details of applications on its licensing register which must be available to the public.

Nothing in the 2003 Act prevents licensing authorities from taking supplementary action to bring applications to the attention of individuals living in the vicinity of the premises concerned, but that is a matter for them to decide.

We are committed to monitoring closely how the new regime operates in practice and this will include looking at evidence about the effectiveness of requirements such as those on the advertising of applications. Where the evidence suggests that the system could be more effective, we will consider revising the guidance or, if necessary, asking Parliament to amend the legislation.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to local authorities on the circumstances in which a local councillor may *(a)* speak on behalf of residents at an open local authority licensing committee meeting dealing with an application and *(b)* inform constituents by circular leaflet of applications for a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. [21457]

James Purnell: As regards *(a)*, under paragraph 5.32 of the guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, a local ward councillor may, if asked, make representations on behalf of persons or businesses, or associations representing them. However, it would be expected that any councillor who is also a member of the licensing committee and who is making such representations would disqualify him or herself from any involvement in the decision-making process. The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 sets out the procedure for who can speak at a hearing. The Secretary of State and I wrote to local authorities on 30 September 2005 about licensing and confirmed that there is nothing to stop a local councillor from making representations if asked to by residents, nor from seeking views of residents on licensing matters, as they would for any other issue.

With respect to *(b)*, it is the responsibility of the person making the application to advertise this, by displaying a notice and by advertising in a local newspaper or newsletter, in conformity with the statutory provisions. It is for local councillors themselves to decide whether to communicate with constituents about license applications, and, if so, by what means.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many licensees have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted a new licence to increase their trading hours for serving alcohol under the Licensing Act 2003; [22871]

(2) how many licensees *(a)* have applied for and *(b)* been granted a new alcohol licence which does not extend their trading hours under the Licensing Act 2003. [22873]

James Purnell *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Data on applications of the kind requested are not currently available, but my Department estimates that around 190,000 applications for premises licences and club premises certificates were submitted by 24 October 2005—about 98 per cent. of the total applications expected.

It would be a significant exercise to gather more detailed information from the 400 licensing authorities, and we believe that this is best done once the transitional

period is complete and all applications have been processed. However, industry bodies estimate that about 40 per cent. of the 60,000 pubs and bars in England and Wales have not sought a variation, and that the remainder have sought to extend their hours.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many licences to serve alcohol have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* granted under the Licensing Act 2003. [22790]

James Purnell *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Data on applications of the kind requested are not currently available, but my Department estimates that around 190,000 applications for premises licences and club premises certificates were submitted by 24 October 2005—about 98 per cent. of the total applications expected.

It would be a significant exercise to gather more detailed information from the 400 licensing authorities, and we believe that this is best done once the transitional period is complete and all applications have been processed. However, industry bodies estimate that about 40 per cent. of the 60,000 pubs and bars in England and Wales have not sought a variation, and that the remainder have sought to extend their hours.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many employees in her Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23376]

Mr. Lammy: The number of employees requesting such training is not recorded centrally in the form that has been requested.

Where staff have requested such training, this has usually been training on refining writing style or perfecting knowledge of grammar, and this has been provided through person-to-person coaching or externally provided training.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of her Department. [23404]

Mr. Lammy: The Department's learning and development policy details literacy and numeracy skills training opportunities for DCMS employees. The document is available for all DCMS staff via the DCMS intranet.

The policy states that if a DCMS employee or their line manager identifies that they may have a literacy or numeracy skills gap, the DCMS Learning and Development team can provide advice and support. If appropriate, the Department can arrange for the employee to be screened to identify the nature and extent of their learning needs. If a literacy or numeracy need is identified, the Department will then arrange and fund appropriate training and sitting of national tests.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23425]

Mr. Lammy: The amount spent per head on such training is not recorded centrally in the form that has been requested.

Priority Groups

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in the take-up of cultural activities by new users from priority groups; and if she will make a statement. [21475]

Mr. Lammy: The Department have already met and exceeded its public service agreement targets to increase the number of new users from priority groups to national and regional museums and the historic environment by March 2006.

The Arts attendance and participation targets each have three sub-targets. Based on the latest survey information, only one of the six targets is currently on target to be met.

I have asked Arts Council England to put in place a plan of remedial action, which will be monitored by the Department.

Television Licences

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government plans to cap the amount the BBC can charge for a television licence. [22985]

James Purnell: We have begun an assessment of the BBC's future funding needs, in line with our commitment in the Green Paper published in March of this year: this process will continue over the coming months and we will announce the outcome in due course.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Audit Commission

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been paid in fees to the Audit Commission by each local authority in England in each of the last two years. [22830]

Mr. Woolas: This is an operational matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and to ensure the answer is made available in the Library of the House.

Building Regulations

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the oral answer to the hon. Member for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine (Sir Robert Smith) of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 826, on building regulations, if he will publish the papers containing the grounds for the claim that the changes proposed to Part L of the Building Regulations will improve existing minimum standards for energy efficiency in new homes by 40 per cent. [23073]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Changes proposed to Building Regulations are supported by a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)

identifying the costs and benefits. The 2002 Part L RIA and a draft of the 2006 one can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website. The final 2006 RIA will be published before the revised regulations come into effect in April. Changes to Part L of the Building Regulations in 2005–06 when combined with changes introduced in 2002 will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings by 40 per cent.

Casinos

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 805W, on casinos, if he will place in the Library copies of the planning appeals relating to casinos that have been considered by *(a)* the Planning Inspectorate and *(b)* the First Secretary of State in the last two years. [22291]

Yvette Cooper: The Planning Inspectorate has decided six appeals with a casino element over the last two years. Copies of these decisions have been made available in the Libraries of the House.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1012–13W, on council tax, if he will list the preparatory work that the Valuation Office Agency carried out on the English council tax revaluation. [22275]

Mr. Woolas: The preparatory work carried out by the Valuation Office Agency for the English council tax revaluation involved the development of the automated valuation model (AVM) and the assessing, updating and digitising of property data for all dwellings. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 447W. The instructions and advice documents, placed in the Library of the House following that answer, and the press releases of 5 September 2003 and 10 September 2004, relating to the AVM, detail the preparatory work. The press releases can be accessed, on line, via the Valuation Office Agency's website, www.voa.gov.uk.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the costs of council tax rebanding exercises have been to date. [23673]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 327W.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22565]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following consultations are currently sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies, and are available on our website.

Department/ Agency	*Title of consultation*	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
ODPM	Amending the Definition of a Caravan	10 August 2005	2 November 2005
ODPM	Proposals for amending Part B (Fire safety) of the Building Regulations	19 July 2005	18 November 2005
ODPM	Annexes to Minerals Policy Statement 1	21 July 2005	31 October 2005
ODPM	Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Procedural guidance	22 August 2005	14 November 2005
ODPM	Emergencies for Fire and Rescue Authorities	16 September 2005	13 December 2005
ODPM	Recruitment and Progression of Fire and Rescue Service staff	9 September 2005	2 December 2005
ODPM	Applying the Planning Acts to the Crown	23 September 2005	16 December 2005

Disabled Facilities Grant

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Clwyd, South (Mr. Jones) of 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1542W, on the disabled facilities grant, (1) what progress has been made with the review; and if he will make a statement; [20447]

(2) what representations he has received as part of the review of the disabled facilities grant; and if he will make a statement. [20486]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 14WS, about the review of disabled facilities grant.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the review of the disabled facilities grant; and when he plans to make the findings of the review public. [21072]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 14WS, about the review of disabled facilities grant.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether empty dwelling management orders will be applicable to empty public sector *(a)* residential and *(b)* commercial properties. [22399]

Yvette Cooper: Privately owned empty homes account for 85 per cent. of all vacant homes. The provisions of the Housing Act 2004 relating to empty dwelling management orders do not apply where the relevant proprietor is a public sector body.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how empty dwelling management orders will operate in relation to private sector properties empty because of the death of the owner. [22401]

Yvette Cooper: A local housing authority will be able to apply to a residential property tribunal for approval to make an empty dwelling management order where a

dwelling has been wholly unoccupied for at least the prescribed period of time and is not excepted by virtue of an order made by the appropriate national authority.

The Housing Act 2004 provides that the appropriate national authority may by order prescribe exceptions to the making of empty dwelling management orders where the vacancy arose following the death of the relevant proprietor. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently undertaken a consultation exercise on proposed exceptions and is currently considering how these will apply to unoccupied dwellings where the relevant proprietor has died.

Green Belt

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers the regional chambers have to review green belt designation; and if he will make a statement. [21490]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 271–72W.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department has taken to prevent the practice of land banking in green belt areas. [21208]

Yvette Cooper: The planning system is in place to control the use and development of land, not its ownership. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware, however, of companies buying agricultural land in green belt areas and subdividing it into small plots for sale where there is little prospect of development being allowed. In April last year officials wrote to local planning authorities, reminding them of their enforcement powers and urging them to engage in publicity to give prospective purchasers of rural plots a more realistic idea of local plan policies and other restraints on development, including the presence of Green Belt.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what area of land within the green belt has been the subject of planning permission granted for housing development since 1997. [21209]

Yvette Cooper: The information on planning permissions granted for housing development within the green belt is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Housing Association Tenants

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the bar to the right to acquire their home at a discount will be lifted for tenants of properties built or acquired by housing associations before 1 April 1997. [23489]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have no plans to change the eligibility for the Right to Acquire scheme. However, the Government are introducing a Social Homebuy product in April 2006 which will help social tenants to buy a minimum 25 per cent. share at a discount.

Details of the Social Homebuy proposals are outlined in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Consultation Paper "Homebuy-expanding the opportunity to own", launched in April 2005 and the Government's Response to this consultation which was published on 14 September 2005. The Consultation Paper is available in the House of Commons Library and the Government's response can be accessed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Local Government Pensions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1015W, on local government pensions, what the *(a)* assets, *(b)* funding shortfall and *(c)* total scheme liability was for each of the scheme administering authorities. [22258]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested, for scheme pension fund administering authorities in England, has been placed on the relevant website. The address is www.xoq83.dial.pipex.com.

Market Towns (Housing Density)

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will *(a)* set limits on the housing density of market towns and *(b)* ensure that changes to housing density in market towns takes place only after consultation with local residents. [20839]

Yvette Cooper: It is for local planning authorities to set appropriate levels of density for housing development in their areas, including in market towns, through the development plan process, having regard to the Government's national policy on housing densities. Current national policy in Planning Policy Guidance note 3 "Housing" was set out in my answer to the hon. Member of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 613W. Local planning authorities are required to involve their communities in the preparation of, and any proposed changes to, their development plans. The Government intend to publish for consultation a new national policy framework for planning for housing through draft Planning Policy Statement 3 later this year.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his estimate is of the cost savings to the Exchequer of introducing a pension scheme retirement age of 65 years for all firemen, local government employees and employees of his Department and its agencies from 2025; and if he will make a statement. [21426]

Mr. Woolas: The normal retirement age in the Local Government Pension Scheme is already 65 and current proposals are that it should be 60 for new entrants to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

Pension provision under the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is the responsibility of the Cabinet Office.

Regional Chambers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the regional chambers are bound by the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity. [22447]

Yvette Cooper: The regional Assemblies as voluntary bodies are not subject to the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity. However, the

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would expect Assemblies in their own operation to have regard to the broad principles contained in the code.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the regional chambers are subject to scrutiny by district auditors. [22448]

Yvette Cooper: The payment of Government grant is conditional upon each regional Assembly keeping relevant accounts and ensuring they are audited by an independent external auditor.

Regional Assemblies as voluntary bodies are not bodies to which the Audit Commission can appoint auditors. However, where the accountable body for an Assembly is a local authority, the Audit Commission may seek approval from the Secretary of State to appoint auditors at the request of an Assembly.

Regional Fire Control Centres

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what were the reasons for announcing site locations for the proposed regional fire control centres in advance of *(a)* completion of and *(b)* consultation upon the business case for the Fire Control Project; and if he will make a statement. [22257]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister did not announce the site locations in advance of consultation on the business case. The FiReControl business case, in accordance with Treasury guidance, is subject to a three stage development process: strategic, outline and full. The first two stages are complete. The project is also subject to the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Review process, which reviews the business case at these stages in order to provide confidence that the investment decision can be taken. In 2004, we consulted fire and rescue authorities on the recommendations of the Mott MacDonald report "The Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales: Update 2003", on which the strategic business case was based. We also consulted them on the outline business case before the decision was taken to proceed with the accommodation procurement. The outline business case is the key document for the purposes of assessing the strength of the case for the project. The full business case will not be available until we have actual costs for the technology/ infrastructure services procurement, and final cost information. It will not be subject to further consultation unless the strength and structure of the arguments change significantly.

Rural Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses have been built in rural settlements in the last five years. [22026]

Yvette Cooper: New build completions data is only available at local authority level therefore it is not possible to say how many dwellings have been built in rural settlements, only in local authorities that are classified as rural. This will therefore include dwellings built in towns that are inside a local authority classified as rural.

The annual numbers of new build completions since 2000–01 for English local authorities defined as rural by DEFRA's Rural Definition and Local Authority Classification are in the table:

Dwellings built in local authorities classified as "rural"[1]

	Number
2000–01	60,255
2001–02	60,057
2002–03	62,291
2003–04	60,826
2004–05	61,415

[1] Category 4, 5 and 6 (see below) local authorities are considered to be rural and have been used to produce the data on new build housing completions. There are 178 English local authorities that are in these categories.

The classification used to define local authorities is as follows:

1. Major Urban: districts with either 100,000 people or 50 per cent. of their population in urban areas with a population of more than 750,000.
2. Large Urban: districts with either 50,000 people or 50 per cent. of their population in one of 17 urban areas with a population between 250,000 and 750,000.
3. Other Urban: districts with fewer than 37,000 people or less than 26 per cent. of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.
4. Significant Rural: districts with more than 37,000 people or more than 26 per cent. of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.
5. Rural-50: districts with at least 50 per cent. but less than 80 per cent. of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.
6. Rural-80: districts with at least 80 per cent. of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns.

For further information on the classification of local authorities please see following rural definitions web link: http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/rural_resd/rural_definition. asp

Source:

P2/NHBC New Build Completions data

Social Housing

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he has given to housing associations on *(a)* their obligation to provide social housing and *(b)* the sale of their property with vacant possession. [22022]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation's registration guidance makes clear that to obtain registered social landlords (RSL) status, the majority of a housing association's business activity (51 per cent. or more) should be in the provision of social housing: This expectation is reiterated in the corporation's good practice note on diversification activity. RSLs have a duty to co-operate with local authorities to enable the latter to fulfil their duties to the homeless, people in priority housing need, the vulnerable and those covered by the Government's Supporting People policy. RSLs provide a proportion of their stock to local authority nominations and temporary accommodation to the homeless. These requirements are set out in the corporation's Regulatory Code and guidance.

When in receipt of funding from the Housing Corporation, RSLs must meet agreed funding conditions. All funding is subject to the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and the corporation's published criteria, procedures and audit arrangements. Non-compliance with these requirements may result in the

withdrawal of allocations and recovery of grant. Grant funding is also conditional upon the RSL meeting the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code.

The voluntary disposal of properties by housing associations requires the consent of the Housing Corporation under section 9 of the Housing Act 1996. The corporation's regulatory circular (number 03/03) advises registered and unregistered housing associations on the requirements of Section 9.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will commission research on the impact of tenants and tenant representation on the running of social housing by *(a)* registered social landlords and *(b)* local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [22273]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation requires all registered social landlords to actively facilitate resident involvement and to report annually on outcomes. The corporation intends to commission a project to measure the delivery of these policy objectives with the housing association sector, and to prepare guidance to enable associations to measure the targets and impact of their annual involvement statements. The corporation has also commissioned a survey of residents seeking their views on, among other things, their involvement in the management of their homes.

In 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned an interim evaluation of tenant participation compacts in local authority housing, to inform a review of the national framework guidance published in 1999. The evaluation reviewed progress on implementing tenant participation arrangements through compacts, including impact on tenants and tenant participation generally. The findings were fed into the revised national framework guidance published in March 2005.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Housing Corporation currently have no plans to commission research in addition to that already mentioned, they will continue to keep this under review.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the Government will require mobile telecommunications companies to receive positive assent to a proposal to erect a telecommunications mast before proceeding with its construction. [21464]

Yvette Cooper: All ground based masts are already subject to planning control so that if the local authority considers that the development will pose a serious threat to amenity, it is able to refuse approval. For masts over 15 metres in height a planning application is required. For masts under 15 metres in height a prior approval application is required.

Local planning authorities have the opportunity to deal with prior approval applications in the same way as a normal planning application so long as they act within eight weeks. Eight weeks is also the performance target for dealing with most planning applications for telecommunications developments.

Thames Gateway

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what budget headings he expects his Department's contribution to the Thames Gateway project to be spent. [20930]

Yvette Cooper: The schemes which have been approved for funding from the Thames Gateway Programme Fund are distributed as follows:

	£ million
UDC, local regeneration partnerships and masterplanning	25
Land purchase and remediation	199
Employment	22
Housing	72
Environment	28
Town centres	27
Education	55
Liveability	15
Transport	72
Utilities	10
Total	525

Travellers

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to issue new guidance on illegal Traveller camps and unauthorised development; and if he will make a statement. [21489]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have established a Gypsy and Traveller Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and one of its aims is to help local authorities to improve their enforcement powers. As part of its work, the Unit is also looking at the operation of these powers to see if further action or guidance is required.

Vacant Homes

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant homes there are in Lancashire; and for what average period houses were vacant in each of the last five years. [21893]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The number of vacant homes by local authority area in Lancashire for the last five years is presented in the following table:

	Number of vacant dwellings in Lancashire
2000	22,252
2001	23,458
2002	21,526
2003	20,992
2004	20,442

The data used for 2000 and 2001 uses a combination of tenure figures available from local authorities' Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Registered Social Landlords' Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR) to the Housing Corporation. The data is as 1 April each year.

The data for years 2002 onwards is as reported on CTB1 & CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to ODPM each year. The figures include both long and short-term empty properties. The data is as reported at a set date in November each year. It is expected that for the two sets of figures, the difference between two snap-shot dates would be insignificant.

Information on the average period houses were vacant is not available centrally.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the 20 local authorities with the greatest number of empty private sector properties at the latest date for which figures are available; how many such properties each has; and what percentage of the total private sector housing stock that figure represents in each case. [21871]

Yvette Cooper: The 20 local authorities with the greatest number of empty private sector properties at 1 April 2005 are provided in the following table:

Local authorities who reported the 20 highest figures for number of private sector vacant dwellings within their area at 1 April 2005

Local authority	*Number of private sector vacant dwellings*	*Private sector vacant dwellings as a percentage of private sector stock*
Birmingham	15,359	5.1
Manchester	11,670	9.2
Liverpool	10,622	7.3
Leeds	10,585	4.4
Bradford	8,083	4.9
Kirklees	5,764	4.1
Sefton	5,625	5.4
Sheffield	5,585	3.4
Kingston upon Hull	5,533	7.1
Stoke-on-Trent	5,508	6.6
Wirral	5,259	4.5
Leicester	5,129	6.0
Newcastle upon Tyne	4,806	5.9
Salford	4,683	6.7
Bromley	4,501	4.0
Wandsworth	4,432	4.5
Wigan	4,340	4.1
Croydon	4,296	3.7
Bristol	4,287	3.2
Doncaster	4,206	4.1

Source:
Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the offices of the *(a)* Officer Commanding Flying/Chief Superintendent at Boscombe Down and *(b)* the Air Officer Commander in Chief HQSTC hold copies of remarks they made in the Board of Inquiry into the crash of RAF Harrier GR7 ZG475 on 1 June 1995. [20598]

Mr. Touhig: A search of the records at Headquarters RAF Strike Command has been conducted, but no copy of the remarks made by the Air Officer Commanding in Chief can be found. RAF Boscombe Down has transferred all the files from that period to archives; the relevant file is being recalled, and I will write further to the right hon. Member when the search of that file has been completed.

Armed Forces Recruitment

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent on recruitment in Northern Ireland for the armed forces in each year since 2001. [23199]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held centrally in the format requested. Nevertheless, the full recruiting costs specific for Northern Ireland for the Naval Service and the RAF in each full year since financial year 2001–02 were as follows:

£ million

Financial year	*Naval Service*	*RAF*	*[1]Army*
2001–02	0.176	0.260	—
2002–03	0.189	0.286	—
2003–04	0.180	0.284	—
2004–05	0.124	0.289	2.907

[1] Prior to FY 2004–05, it is not possible to identify accurately how much was spent on Army recruiting by specific areas.

Combat Vehicles

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Scorpion and *(b)* Sabre vehicles were withdrawn from service in 2004; and which vehicles replaced them. [22351]

Mr. Ingram: The Scorpion was withdrawn from service in 1995 and not replaced. 132 of the vehicles were converted into the Sabre variant and 32 were converted to Salamander. The Sabre fleet was withdrawn from service in 2004 and not replaced. The CVR(T) fleet as a whole is scheduled to be replaced by elements of the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) suite of vehicles and the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle (CLV). The initial variants of FRES are due to be in service early in the next decade and the Panther is due to come into service in 2007.

Dean Hill

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce the name of the purchaser of the Dean Hill site; and if he will make a statement about the future use of the site. [22598]

Mr. Touhig: The closing date for tenders for the main site (of about 156 ha in size) is 10 November 2005. We hope to be able to select a preferred bidder early in December 2005 and to complete the sale by the end of February 2006. It is unlikely that the name of the successful bidder will be made public until after we have exchanged contracts during February 2006.

Additionally, four former owners have expressed an interest in buying back their agricultural land outside the security fence and the remaining agricultural land outside the wire is being offered for sale to tenant farmers.

All of the houses have now been sold except for one which is likely to be bought by a housing association.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22454]

Mr. Touhig: The table details the amount of energy consumed by the Ministry of Defence in the last five years—reported in energy returns from Top Level Budgets.

	kWh (weather corrected)		
	Electricity	Fossil Fuels (inc. heat)	Total
1999–2000	2,053,855,955	5,459,147,848	7,513,003,803
2000–01	2,082,485,055	5,318,547,824	7,401,032,879
2001–02	1,894,069,084	5,275,735,227	7,169,804,311
2002–03	1,995,090,434	5,197,327,134	7,192,417,568
2003–04	2,056,585,715	5,286,484,600	7,343,070,315
2004–05	2,012,300,237	5,530,636,511	7,542,936,748

Since 2000–01 the Ministry of Defence has reported aggregated utilities (gas, electricity and water supply) expenditure in the Departmental Resources and Accounts. Separate energy costs are not collated. Expenditure on utilities are also published in the National Statistics Publication: UK Defence Statistics 2005: Table 1.8a. Defence Expenditure Outturn in the UK by Industry Group. A copy is available in the Library of the House.

Future Rapid Effects System

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Future Rapid Effects System Fleet review has been *(a)* framed and *(b)* completed; and if he will make a statement. [22355]

Mr. Ingram: It is planned to hold the Fleet Review in December 2005. This will be the opportunity to assess the performance, time and cost characteristics of candidate solutions to the FRES requirement and to focus the future programme of analysis.

Gulf War Veterans

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Gulf War veterans live in Northern Ireland. [19568]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not routinely compile information on the whereabouts of Gulf veterans.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the personal medical records of veterans from Wales of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict have been lost. [22346]

Mr. Touhig: Medical records of members of the armed forces are not held centrally. For those veterans still serving, medical records are normally held locally by Service Medical Officers. For individuals who have left the Services, the normal practice is to offer the records to their GPs for permanent retention. It is not possible, therefore, to estimate the number that may have been lost.

In October 2001, Ministry of Defence published the paper "Medical Records in the Gulf". This paper describes the arrangements for medical record keeping during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict; discusses a number of reasons why records that were kept may not have been complete, and provides guidance to Gulf veterans on how to obtain their service medical records. A copy of this paper is in the Library of the House and it is available on the MoD's website at: www.gulfwar.mod.uk.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the final report on the Porton Down studies into vaccines administered to service men and women during the 1990–91 Gulf conflict to be published. [22498]

Mr. Touhig: Interim results from the main study in our Vaccines Interactions Research Programme, announced on 1 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 55WS, have been published and show no apparent adverse health consequences following the administration of vaccines and/or pyridostigmine bromide (the active ingredient in Nerve Agent Pre-treatment tablets). Final results are expected to be submitted for peer-reviewed publication this year.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many veterans from Wales of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict have been examined as part of the Medical Assessment Programme. [22499]

Mr. Touhig: As at 20 October 2005, at the time they attended Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme, 113 Gulf veterans from the 1990–91 conflict were recorded with addresses in Wales.

Inoculations

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* regulars and *(b)* reservists have had the necessary inoculations as recommended by his Department prior to deployment; how many have paid for their own inoculations in each year since March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [21710]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Vaccination status is an important aspect of operational readiness of armed forces personnel. The Ministry of Defence has a duty of care to all its personnel, although vaccinations are accepted voluntarily and can be refused by individuals.

Information on regular and reservist inoculations is held in different formats and at different levels by the single Services and as such it is not possible to provide a full account of the vaccination status of the armed forces as a whole. To provide this information, individual medical records from all Services would have to be examined at disproportionate cost.

Every effort is made to ensure that personnel do not pay for their inoculations themselves. While this situation is rare, it can occur if reservists visit their own GP prior to deployment to receive any recommended vaccines. However, provided the individual has a record of their immunisation, they can apply to have any costs incurred reimbursed.

The exact number of personnel who have paid for a recommended inoculation is unknown. This information would have to be collated from individual medical records and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Lloyd Inquiry

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the right hon. Lord Lloyd of Berwick regarding the evidence submitted by the Department to the Lloyd Inquiry; and if he will make a statement. [22084]

Mr. Touhig: Transcripts of correspondence between this Department and Lord Lloyd's inquiry were included in the inquiry's report, a copy of which can be found at www.lloyd-gwii.com. Following publication of his report no further such discussions have taken place with Lord Lloyd.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the Civil Partnerships Act 2004 on demand for married quarters. [23318]

Mr. Touhig: It is not possible to identify the number of service personnel who will elect to enter into a civil partnership. However, it is assessed that the numbers will be small and any associated requirement for service families accommodation would be absorbed within the existing housing management margin.

Medical Assessment Programme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made in studies into reproductive problems reported by some service men and women who served in the Gulf in 1990–91. [22085]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has funded an independent study of the reproductive health of UK veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict through the Medical Research Council (MRC). The findings of the study, which was undertaken by researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, have been published in medical/scientific journals and are on our website at: www.mod.uk/issues/gulfwar/research/health.htm

The Military Health Research Advisory Group of the MRC considered the findings. They advised that there is little more to be learnt from reproductive studies on these veterans and that they did not expect to be making any new recommendations for further research in this area. We are guided by that advice.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department has taken to monitor service personnel who have been examined as part of the Medical Assessment Programme. [22086]

Mr. Touhig: The consultant at the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme (GVMAP) writes to the referring doctor immediately after the consultation with a copy of the assessment report and then later, usually within six weeks, sends a letter with test results. Patients who wish to see their report and who have signed a consent form are automatically sent a copy of the medical assessment report and test results at the same time as both are sent to the referring doctor.

We ask referring doctors to co-operate in taking forward treatment recommendations and in responding to any inquiries about a patient's progress. The GVMAP will send a standard follow up letter to all GPs about ill patients who have been referred, asking for information on the patient's condition and subsequent treatment. This is usually done within six months of the GVMAP appointment.

For those patients referred to our network of specified Post Traumatic Stress Disorder centres there is an automatic follow up at one year. A paper has been published in Military Medicine, May 2005, on the clinical outcomes of such referrals.

Responsibility for the primary care of patients rests with GPs and it is for the GP to decide on what further treatment should be considered. Unless contacted by the GP the GVMAP cannot, nor should, interfere in the GP/patient relationship.

Missing Weapons

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Army *(a)* handguns and *(b)* rifles went missing in the UK during the last year for which figures are available; [20970]

(2) how many missing Army handguns and rifles were recovered in the last year for which figures are available. [20969]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The information requested for the period 26 October 2004 to 15 October 2005 is detailed in the following table:

Date loss reported	*Weapon Type*	*Recovered*
26 October 2004	2 × 9 mm Pistols	0
15 April 2005	1 × Rifle	0
28 April 2005	2 × 9 mm Pistols	0
21 July 2005	3 × .22 Rifles	0
6 October 2005	1 × Rifle	0
15 October 2005	1 × Pistol	1
Total	10	1

Operation Telic

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men and women who have served in Operation Telic have reported illnesses similar to those reported by veterans of the Gulf War. [22473]

Mr. Touhig: Information on all the illnesses reported by members of the armed forces is not held centrally. For serving personnel, medical records are normally held locally by service medical officers. For individuals who have left the services, the normal practice is to offer the records to their GP for permanent retention.

As a result of the lessons learned during the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict, the Ministry of Defence took early action to put in place a large scale and long-term epidemiological study to monitor the physical and psychological health of personnel who served in

Operation TELIC. This research is being undertaken by King's College, London and the results are expected to be published in 2006. If any unusual patterns of illness are found, they will be addressed as soon as possible.

Personnel Service Files

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his plans are for the storage and retention of existing service files of Second World War personnel. [22541]

Mr. Touhig: The Service personnel records of those who served during the Second World War will continue to be retained by the Ministry of Defence. Initial discussions have taken place with staff from The National Archives that are likely to lead to the eventual transfer of the records to the National Archives at Kew.

Royal Irish Regiment

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to respond to representations made to him by a number of hon. Members on 1 September regarding the future of the Home Service Royal Irish Regiment. [22851]

Mr. Ingram: We are grateful for the representations we received in response to our request for views on the future of the personnel of The Royal Irish (Home Service). Work is in progress to develop the details of the settlement for Home Service personnel, but at this stage we are unable to give a firm indication of when we will be able to make a substantive announcement.

We recognise that members of the Home Service are anxious to know the outcome of this work, which is being taken forward as a matter of urgency so that we can inform them at the earliest opportunity.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average time period is between an infantry Territorial Army private qualifying on basic training phases 1 and 2 and being called up for a six month tour of operational duty. [22356]

Mr. Touhig: As records are not held centrally, the level of detail sought in the question can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many infantry Territorial Army privates have volunteered to serve a further tour of operational duty since March 2003. [22358]

Mr. Touhig: As records are not held centrally, the level of detail sought in the question can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, I can confirm that in total, some 1,350 members of the Territorial Army have been mobilized for a second or subsequent tour.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many personnel *(a)* signed up as infantry Territorial Army privates and *(b)* qualified under phase 1 and 2 of basic training between March 2003 and June 2005; [22360]

(2) how many infantry Territorial Army privates left the service between March 2003 and June 2005. [22359]

Mr. Touhig: Between 1 March 2003 and 30 June 2005 some 3,800 people were recruited as infantry Territorial Army (TA) privates and some 1,300 private infantry soldiers completed their phase 1 and 2 training. In that same period some 1,960 privates left the service. These figures do not include those joining or serving in the University Officer Training Corps, full time reserve staff and non regular permanent staff.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* infantry Territorial Army (TA) privates, *(b)* infantry TA non-commissioned officers and *(c)* officers are serving in the Territorial Army. [22361]

Mr. Touhig: As at 1 September 2005 there were approximately 4,110 privates, 2,300 non-commissioned officers (lance corporals and above), and 780 officers serving in the infantry Territorial Army. These figures do not include non regular permanent staff or those serving in the University Officer Training Corps, or on full time reserve service.

Note:
Rounding:
Where rounding has been used, totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.
When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* peacetime, *(b)* wartime and *(c)* estimated actual strength of the Territorial Army (i) as a total and (ii) broken down by individual corps; and what actual strength of the (A) infantry and (B) yeomanry is. [18300]

Mr. Touhig: I assume that the right hon. and learned Member is referring to the peacetime and wartime establishments of the Territorial Army (TA). The TA does not have separate peacetime or wartime establishments. The current establishment of 41,610 remains at all times. The actual strength of the TA as at 1 September 2005 as a total is 35,560 (including some 1,120 mobilised personnel) and can be found broken down by individual corps, including the Infantry and the Yeomanry (known as the Royal Armoured Corps) in the following table:

Arm/service	*Strength (including mobilised personnel)*
Staff	90
Royal Armoured Corps	1,270
Royal Artillery	2,170
Royal Engineers	2,430
Royal Signals	3,880
Infantry	7,180
Army Air Corps	110
Royal Army Chaplains Division	60
Royal Logistics Corps	5,800
Royal Army Medical Corps	2,800
Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers	2,230
Adjutant Generals Corps (AGC) (Royal Military Police)	300
AGC (Staff and Personnel Support)	920
AGC (Education and Training Support)	20

Arm/service	Strength (including mobilised personnel)
AGC (Army Legal Service)	10
Royal Army Veterinary Corps	10
Small Arms School Corps	[1]—
Royal Army Dentistry Corps	60
Intelligence Corps	480
Army Physical Training Corps	[1]—
General List	350
Queen Alexandra's Royal Auxiliary Nursing Corps	1,150
Officer Training Corps	4,090
Unallocated	130
Total	35,560

[1] Zero or rounded to zero.

Notes:

1. Where rounding has been used, totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

2. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Type 23 Frigates

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* repairs, *(b)* structural alteration and *(c)* stability tests are required for the three Type 23 frigates being sold to Chile. [22357]

Mr. Ingram: During the reactivation of the frigates, repairs will be undertaken to ensure that the platform, systems and equipment are functional, safe and certified as necessary to comply with maritime regulations. This will include re-confirmation of ship stability. There will be no structural alterations, unless at a later date Chile propose and fund structural alterations to meet their particular requirements.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Gravesend County Court

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the financial position of the Gravesend County Court was in financial year 2004–05; and what the position is to date in 2005–06. [22681]

Ms Harman: The local operating costs for Gravesend County Court for 2004–05 were £60,308.00. To date the operating costs for 2005–06 amount to £32,791.85 which represents 49 per cent. of the budget, reflecting an increase in staff pay and increases in some of the service budgets. District Judge fees are excluded from this figure as they have been reported through a combined county budget in 2004–05.

In 2004–05 £25,151.15 was spent on accommodation related matters. For the first half of 2005–06 £6,167.64 has been spent. Capital and further maintenance projects for the 2005–06 period have not been allocated pending the outcome of the consultation.

The fee income for 2004–05 was £240,377 and to date for 2005–06 is £143,587.41. There has been no significant increase in fees for this year. Projected maintenance costs including required Disability Discrimination Act works are estimated at £300,000.

National Legal Services

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received about *(a)* National Legal Services and *(b)* their activities in the last two years. [22669]

Bridget Prentice: I am not aware of any representations having been received by this Department in connection with National Legal Services or their activities in the last two years.

Party Election Broadcasts

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many candidates political parties must nominate in a UK parliamentary election in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Northern Ireland and *(d)* Wales to be eligible for a party election broadcast. [23638]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

Decisions on the allocation of party election broadcasts are a matter for the relevant broadcasters, acting in accordance with the rules established by Ofcom, the BBC and the Welsh Authority having regard to any views expressed by the Electoral Commission.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what bonuses have been paid to senior civil servants at the Child Support Agency in each of the last four years; [13873]

(2) how much was paid to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency in bonus payments related to performance in each of the last four years. [13881]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 1 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much was paid to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency in bonus payments related to performance in each of the last four years.

You also asked how much was paid to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency in bonus payments related to performance in each of the last four years.

The table below contains the number and total of bonus payments awarded to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency over the past 4 years. All of these payments relate to performance.

	Number of bonuses awarded	Total performance related bonus payments (£)	Total special bonus payments (£)	Total SCS paybill at 31 March (£)
2001–02	4	13,192	n/a	436,061
2002–03	7	47,000	n/a	816,636
2003–04	7	38,120	n/a	851,885
2004–05	10	33,050	5,500	791,020

I hope you find this response helpful.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was paid to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency in bonus payments related to performance in each of the last three years. [15185]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Dr. McCrea, dated 1 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what bonuses have been paid to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency in bonus payments related to performance in each of the last three years.

The table below contains the number and total of bonus payments awarded to senior civil servants in the Child Support Agency over the past 3 years. All of these payments relate to performance.

	Number of bonuses awarded	Total performance related bonus payments (£)	Total special bonus payments (£)	Total SCS paybill at 31 March (£)
2002–03	7	47,000	n/a	816,636
2003–04	7	38,120	n/a	851,885
2004–05	10	33,050	5,500	791,020

I hope you find this response helpful.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims for *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* attendance allowance have been processed by citizens advice bureaux staff; and how much has been paid to the citizens advice bureaux for (i) the use of their offices and (ii) the work of their staff in processing claims for his Department. [19632]

Mr. Timms: DWP recognises the important role the citizens advice bureaux play in helping people with benefit claims. The alternative office has been developed to allow a member of a voluntary organisation who is accredited, to collect information and verify claims. Training is provided by the Pension Service to support these organisations to carry out these tasks.

The number of pension credit and attendance allowance applications that are verified specifically by citizens advice bureaux staff is not recorded.

There are currently two joint teams operating that include citizens advice bureaux partners. Under the joint team agreement each of the parties is responsible for funding all costs incurred by them in respect of the provision of the services, the premises and the information technology and systems. The Department therefore does not provide funding to the citizens advice bureaux for this purpose.

The pension service also provides local service information points within 30 citizens advice bureaux offices around the country, working together for the mutual benefit of the customer. These arrangements are with the agreement of the local office and no funding is provided for the use of accommodation.

Cold Weather Payments

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cold weather payments have been made in each year since 1995–96; what the cost of such payments was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [21422]

Mr. Timms: A cold weather payment of £8.50 is made when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0°C or below over seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to the eligible customer's postcode. Eligible customers are those awarded pension credit, income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance who have a pensioner or disability premium, or a child who is disabled or aged under five, when the temperature criterion is met for their postcode.

The numbers and costs of cold weather payments made in Great Britain in each year since 1995–96 are given in the following table.

	Number (000)	Cost (£ million)
1995–96	7,252	61.6
1996–97	4,964	42.2
1997–98	55	0.5
1998–99	26	0.2
1999–2000	114	1.0
2000–01	3,535	30.0
2001–02	1,804	15.3
2002–03	1,675	14.2
2003–04	418	3.5
2004–05	213	1.8

Source:
Secretary of State's annual reports on the Social Fund

Housing Benefit

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of housing benefit claimants in deregulated tenancies renting from private landlords faced housing benefit shortfalls as a result of *(a)* rent officer determined restrictions and *(b)* rent officer determined single room rent restrictions in the last period for which figures are available; what the average value of the shortfall was for (i) housing benefit claimants with a shortfall and (ii) housing benefit claimants with a single room rent shortfall; and if he will make a statement. [19931]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the tables.

The proportion of housing benefit claimants in deregulated tenancies renting from private landlords who face housing benefit shortfalls as a result of rent officer determined restrictions: England

	Percentage
All housing benefit claimants with a shortfall as a result of rent officer determined restrictions	55
All housing benefit claimants with a shortfall as a result of rent officer determined single room rent restrictions	5

Source:
Rent Officer Data 2003–04 (England only)

The average shortfall for housing benefit private-sector de-regulated caseload: England

	£
All housing benefit claimants with a shortfall	23
Housing benefit claimants receiving the single room rent with a shortfall	44

Notes:
1. A shortfall is defined as the difference between the contractual rent and the maximum amount of housing benefit a claimant could receive. This does not take into account non-dependant deductions or any income over the applicable amount.
2. Average amounts are rounded to the nearest pound.

Source:
Rent Officer Data 2003–04 (England only)

Miss Helen Thomas

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he has completed his consideration of correspondence of 8 June from the hon. Member for Swansea, East concerning the case of Miss Helen Thomas. [17959]

Mrs. McGuire: A reply has been sent to the hon. Member today. I regret that the correspondence was not handled correctly and that a reply was not sent sooner.

Pensions

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact the changes in pension rules relating to the purchase of commercial property will have on businesses. [22248]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have been asked to reply.

The regulatory impact assessment (RIA) "Simplifying the Taxation of Pensions" published in April 2004 sets out an assessment of the potential impact of the whole pensions simplification package.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy; and if he will make a statement. [21975]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office and Department of Health are responsible for the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme, which has led the Government response to the strategy.

The programme has made good progress in introducing measures in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder; implementing the Tackling Violent Crime Programme and Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns in partnership with the police and other stakeholders and working with the alcohol industry to develop a principles and standards document and National Producers Fund, both of which are due to be launched shortly.

The Department of Health has recently completed an audit of services available for alcohol treatment and is shortly due to start demonstration projects targeting screening and brief interventions for hazardous drinkers.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of antisocial behaviour orders have been breached, broken down by those imposed on *(a)* juveniles and *(b)* adults. [21845]

Hazel Blears: Data on convictions for breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003. Of the 1,892 ASBOs issued during this period, as reported to the Home Office, 42 per cent. of persons (793) breached their ASBO on one or more occasions. Of these, 49 per cent. were juveniles (392) and 51 per cent. were adults (401).

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead since 1997. [22743]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. From commencement up to 31 May 2000 data were collected, on aggregate numbers only, by police force area. From copies of the orders received, since 1 June 2000, we are able to determine the local government authority areas in which restrictions are imposed.

The number of ASBOs issued, as notified to the Home Office, in the local government authority area of Dacorum borough council, in which the Hemel Hempstead constituency is situated, from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2004 (latest available) is seven.

Armed Police

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of police officers have been armed in each year since 1992. [22969]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible to provide accurate figures in the form requested. However, the number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs) in police forces in England and Wales for years 1994–2004 are shown in the table.

Authorised firearms officers (AFOs) in police forces in England and Wales for years 1994–2004

	Number
1994–95	6,837
1995–96	6,554
1996–97	6,738
1997–98	6,585
1998–99	6,308
1999–2000	6,262
2000–01	6,064
2001–02	5,776
2002–03	5,763
2003–04	6,096

Atos Origin

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the minutes of the meetings between his officials and Atos Origin. [10713]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Meetings between Home Department officials and Atos Origin are based on an IT contract awarded in August 2004 which commenced on 1 November 2004. The engagement between IND and Atos Origin results in significant quantities of recorded minutes, covering all aspects of the working relationship. Consideration could be given to making minutes of meetings or action plans available to address a specific query, subject to commercial considerations and disproportionate cost.

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which consultants have been employed by his Department in each of the last three years. [895]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department does not hold central records of all the consultancy companies that have been employed in each of the last three years. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office is currently addressing this problem with the implementation of an Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Adelphi, in the core Home Office and in the Prison Service, Phoenix, which will provide accurate management information on the Department's use of consultants.

Crime

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the Partners against Crime partnership between the Post Office and Dyfed-Powys police constabulary. [10343]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 6 July 2005]:* I understand that this six-month trial initiative, which was set up in partnership by Dyfed-Powys police and the Post Office Ltd., has yet to be formally evaluated. A local evaluation will take place in October at the end of the pilot scheme. I am pleased to say that early feedback is positive, and suggests that public reassurance has improved as a result of the initiative.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the level of violent crime in Sussex in each of the last five years. [17768]

Hazel Blears: The number of recorded offences of violent crime in Sussex is given in the tables. It is estimated that the effect of the introduction nationally of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002 was a 20 per cent. increase in recorded violent crime in its first year.

Table 1: Offences of violent crime recorded in Sussex, 2000–01 and 2001–02

	Number of offences
2000–01	19,505
2001–02	19,879

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences of violent crime recorded in Sussex, 2002–03 to 2004–05

	Number of offences
2002–03	20,590
2003–04	22,126
2004–05	30,122

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether minimisation of case accumulation is a priority for the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 2005–06. [22375]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of applications received by the Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC) has increased. Interim steps have been taken urgently to expedite case review and so try to reduce the backlog. Moreover a high-level review of case working processes and policies to identify areas of improvement is currently under way.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the backlog of cases at the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 2004–05. [22376]

Fiona Mactaggart: There has been a general upward trend in the applications received by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) and the case in-take in 2004–05 at 955 was the highest for six years.

The CCRC recognises the distress that is caused to applicants and has identified the need to undergo a programme of change to address backlogs and reduce waiting times. To this end they have embarked on a comprehensive review of their casework processes and

policies which it is hoped will result in long term efficiency gains and a gradual reduction in the backlog and waiting times over the next three years.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to minimise case accumulation at the Criminal Cases Review Commission. [22377]

Fiona Mactaggart: The commission is making strenuous efforts to minimise case accumulation. Urgent steps are being taken to expedite review in the more complex cases. Furthermore, a high-level review of case working processes and policies has been implemented to identify possible changes which will permit speedier completion of reviews without compromising thoroughness or quality.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many claims have been received by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme from applicants alleging *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse in care homes and residential schools since 1992; how many such claims have been (i) settled and (ii) refused; how many are ongoing; how much compensation has been paid; and in how many claims compensation has been reduced. [19949]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information has been provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA). It relates to applications made following the introduction of the tariff-based compensation scheme on 1 April 1996. Figures for earlier years are not readily available.

Claims to CICA for sexual and physical abuse in care homes and residential schools since 1996

		Cases resolved					
Nature of claim	*Applications received*	*No award*	*Full award*	*Reduced award*	*Suspended*	*Amount paid (£)*	*Cases outstanding*
Physical abuse of children	2	1	1	—	—	2,000	—
Sexual assault (institutional adult)	19	10	3	—	1	14,800	5
Sexual assault (institutional child)	38	10	22	2	1	57,000	3
Totals	59	21	26	2	2	73,800	8

Criminal Justice and Public Order Act

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the procedure provided for by section 62A of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 has been implemented in each of the years for which figures are available. [23156]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

Date Rape

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reports of date rape have been recorded in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland in each of the last five years. [22349]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices for parking violations have been issued in each local authority since 1997. [23076]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Available information on fixed penalty notices is by police force area and is given in the table. The information relates to all offences of obstruction, waiting and parking in England and Wales during the calendar years 1997 to 2003 (latest available).

Information for 2004 will be available early in 2006. Under the Road Traffic Act 1991, Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) powers allow local authorities to take over responsibility for enforcing parking contraventions from police. Data on penalty charge notices (PCNs) from individual local authorities operating Decriminalised Parking Enforcement were first published in the Home Office publication 'Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales 2002 Supplementary tables'. The latest publication 2003 [Table 22*(a)*—22*(b)* refers] lists data by local authorities partaking in the scheme, a copy of which is available in the Library. This publication can also be accessed on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics (RDS) website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm

Fixed penalty data by police force area for obstruction, waiting and parking offences[1,2] England and Wales 1997–2003

Number of offences

	1997		*1998*	
Police force area	*Endorsable Number of tickets*	*Non-endorsable Number of tickets*	*Endorsable Number of tickets*	*Non-endorsable Number of tickets*
Avon and Somerset	7	58,107	4	52,916
Bedfordshire	—	35,469	—	34,592
Cambridgeshire	2	32,499	1	28,779
Cheshire	3	32,257	4	30,182
Cleveland	—	21,700	2	22,864
Cumbria	2	20,800	2	23,162
Derbyshire	3	23,870	1	25,998
Devon and Cornwall	4	80,531	2	84,877

Fixed penalty data by police force area for obstruction, waiting and parking offences[1,2] England and Wales 1997–2003

Number of offences

Police force area	1997 Endorsable Number of tickets	1997 Non-endorsable Number of tickets	1998 Endorsable Number of tickets	1998 Non-endorsable Number of tickets
Dorset	—	40,725	—	32,790
Durham	1	15,040	2	15,912
Essex	10	59,748	9	58,919
Gloucestershire	1	33,417	—	31,067
Greater Manchester	7	166,242	9	141,889
Hampshire	5	70,475	7	66,249
Hertfordshire	2	52,954	3	31,219
Humberside	3	29,027	3	25,990
Kent	11	65,033	5	58,707
Lancashire	19	94,864	8	82,837
Leicestershire	5	53,338	2	49,078
Lincolnshire	—	29,067	9	26,641
London, City of	—	666	—	1,109
Merseyside	6	98,229	4	97,518
Met Police	90	160,761	98	205,779
Norfolk	—	36,350	1	30,754
Northamptonshire	—	29,576	—	27,854
Northumbria	7	47,592	3	45,653
North Yorkshire	5	22,127	7	19,970
Nottinghamshire	2	42,021	2	37,004
South Yorkshire	4	28,256	7	30,847
Staffordshire	11	26,445	9	27,459
Suffolk	6	23,037	5	21,753
Surrey	6	25,614	7	25,400
Sussex	13	120,244	7	111,859
Thames Valley	6	77,971	6	76,943
Warwickshire	1	15,550	2	18,020
West Mercia	4	26,221	4	26,138
West Midlands	23	156,251	26	148,944
West Yorkshire	10	69,608	7	63,556
Wiltshire	5	16,025	2	15,452
Dyfed-Powys	4	14,456	4	14,172
Gwent	10	20,874	2	22,114
North Wales	2	21,750	9	19,172
South Wales	4	104,151	4	105,650
England and Wales	304	2,198,938	289	2,117,788

Number of offences

Police force area	1999 Endorsable Number of tickets	1999 Non-endorsable Number of tickets	2000 Endorsable Number of tickets	2000 Non-endorsable Number of tickets
Avon and Somerset	7	49,519	1	34,551
Bedfordshire	—	5,175	2	3,485
Cambridgeshire	—	30,387	1	32,675
Cheshire	3	25,922	3	19,248
Cleveland	1	18,633	—	15,487
Cumbria	2	12,952	3	5,857
Derbyshire	—	22,926	—	22,259
Devon and Cornwall	5	77,906	3	77,874
Dorset	—	32,708	3	31,256
Durham	—	12,140	2	16,082
Essex	5	49,230	6	40,656
Gloucestershire	1	28,467	1	28,527
Greater Manchester	5	78,844	3	71,056
Hampshire	8	50,937	5	31,622
Hertfordshire	2	36,064	3	32,574
Humberside	2	23,910	4	26,594
Kent	5	48,753	12	3,673
Lancashire	15	71,449	6	64,929
Leicestershire	3	45,722	3	37,987
Lincolnshire	2	15,486	2	15,893
London, City of	3	725	—	438
Merseyside	12	86,912	3	61,246
Met Police	41	192,069	27	196,965
Norfolk	1	26,388	2	25,337
Northamptonshire	2	21,272	—	12,874
Northumbria	8	39,865	9	44,687
North Yorkshire	2	20,437	2	13,529

Number of offences

Police force area	1999 Endorsable Number of tickets	1999 Non-endorsable Number of tickets	2000 Endorsable Number of tickets	2000 Non-endorsable Number of tickets
Nottinghamshire	—	34,871	2	31,525
South Yorkshire	11	26,694	8	28,940
Staffordshire	4	21,256	5	11,936
Suffolk	1	20,574	2	20,837
Surrey	6	20,544	4	21,431
Sussex	5	101,971	6	119,765
Thames Valley	3	66,454	4	51,917
Warwickshire	—	16,749	1	13,801
West Mercia	2	26,688	1	22,736
West Midlands	23	119,867	17	88,137
West Yorkshire	5	60,337	1	61,143
Wiltshire	1	12,896	1	10,210
Dyfed-Powys	6	18,026	2	17,481
Gwent	.	20,668	3	19,587
North Wales	3	16,470	36	16,044
South Wales	10	96,564	4	92,306
England and Wales	215	1,805,427	203	1,595,157

Number of offences

Police force area	2001 Endorsable Number of tickets	2001 Non-endorsable Number of tickets	2002 Endorsable Number of tickets	2002 Non-endorsable Number of tickets
Avon and Somerset	4	25,827	1	22,481
Bedfordshire	—	2,991	—	3,602
Cambridgeshire	1	33,286	—	32,237
Cheshire		17,532	1	15,776
Cleveland	1	10,634	2	15,721
Cumbria	—	5,758	3	2,384
Derbyshire	—	18,792	2	16,409
Devon and Cornwall	3	59,407	4	59,631
Dorset	—	25,500	—	8,034
Durham	1	12,521	1	12,499
Essex	1	29,772	1	23,534
Gloucestershire	—	26,500	—	26,411
Greater Manchester	2	43,381	3	34,820
Hampshire	9	40,015	4	22,695
Hertfordshire	3	32,709	—	27,054
Humberside	3	25,701	2	26,504
Kent	10	1,702	4	1,086
Lancashire	6	55,992	4	47,729
Leicestershire	3	39,885	3	41,651
Lincolnshire	—	15,725	—	16,659
London, City of	2	511	—	741
Merseyside	4	49,967	3	35,989
Met Police	21	141,776	18	141,950
Norfolk	—	23,880	3	10,135
Northamptonshire	—	7,988	—	4,457
Northumbria	24	57,780	15	48,670
North Yorkshire	—	14,435	1	9,435
Nottinghamshire	—	24,515	—	13,387
South Yorkshire	6	30,360	6	29,356
Staffordshire	7	9,154	1	7,275
Suffolk	—	18,953	1	20,439
Surrey	1	22,961	4	25,040
Sussex	5	71,966	1	47,515
Thames Valley	5	37,409	6	34,605
Warwickshire	—	15,355	—	16,556
West Mercia	4	17,104	2	17,382
West Midlands	18	64,030	10	46,436
West Yorkshire	3	55,300	5	55,977
Wiltshire	1	7,450	—	8,395
Dyfed-Powys	3	13,860	7	17,074
Gwent	—	17,765	—	19,041
North Wales	19	13,108	3	10,581
South Wales	6	85,616	4	87,528
England and Wales	176	1,324,873	125	1,164,881

Number of offences

Police force area	2003 Endorsable Number of tickets	Non-endorsable Number of tickets
Avon and Somerset	14	17,638
Bedfordshire	—	2,235
Cambridgeshire	1	22,459
Cheshire	1	15,938
Cleveland	—	8,522
Cumbria	2	1,814
Derbyshire	2	15,779
Devon and Cornwall	2	57,699
Dorset	—	635
Durham	—	5,668
Essex	4	9,953
Gloucestershire	1	27,703
Greater Manchester	—	27,964
Hampshire	8	18,384
Hertfordshire	1	9,216
Humberside	1	25,503
Kent	6	979
Lancashire	8	31,771
Leicestershire	1	31,023
Lincolnshire	—	18,563
London, City of	3	67a
Merseyside	2	17,600
Met Police	26	209,195
Norfolk	—	9,532
Northamptonshire	—	3,701
Northumbria	21	30,418
North Yorkshire	—	5,670
Nottinghamshire	1	6,634
South Yorkshire	7	27,549
Staffordshire	1	8,410
Suffolk	14	20,183
Surrey	5	16,125
Sussex	2	46,181
Thames Valley	4	24,781
Warwickshire	—	14,041
West Mercia	3	12,451
West Midlands	15	53,118
West Yorkshire	2	54,176
Wiltshire	—	5,618
Dyfed-Powys	3	13,777
Gwent	1	19,713
North Wales	1	12,271
South Wales	7	81,568
England and Wales	170	1,042,836

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s.22; Transport Act 2000 as 173(5); 173(6); 173(7); 174(3); 175(2); 175(3); 175(4); 190 Highway Act 1835 ss. 72 and 78; RTA 1988 ss. 19 and 21; Highways Act 1980 s. 133(1); Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 ss. 5(1), 8, 32–36 and 45–53; Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 Regs. 101 and 103; Transport Act 2000 Part III; Metropolitan Police Act 1839 s. 54 (1)

[2] Does not include Decriminalised Parking Enforcements (DPE).

Historical Sex Abuse Cases

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how contamination of evidence is avoided by the police in historical sex abuse cases; and if he will make a statement. [20172]

Paul Goggins: All investigations into historic child abuse by the police are bound by a combination of common law, legislation and Codes of Practice. The key pieces of legislation regulating this area are the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2003), which both have associated Codes of Practice. Failure to comply with the Codes could result in improperly gathered evidence being ruled inadmissible by the courts as well as disciplinary action being taken against the police officers involved.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he takes to ensure that the agencies involved in historical sex abuse investigations provide sufficient training to their staff. [20200]

Hazel Blears: The Association of Chief Police Officer's (ACPO) Rape Working Group is currently commissioning the National Centre for Policing Excellence (a business unit of Centrex), to develop a national police training and development programme.

ACPO has also commissioned Centrex and NCPE to produce a national Investigating Child Abuse and Safeguarding Children (Learning and Development) Programme. The specialist child abuse investigator element of this programme will be launched in December 2005.

The investigation of historic/institutional child abuse guidance—"The Senior Investigating Officer's Handbook"—is guidance produced by ACPO, after consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service and the Department of Health. The Government have also produced guidance, "Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Inter-Agency Issues", which can be found on the Home Office website.

Homicides

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to reduce homicides committed by people other than those who suffer from mental ill health. [13598]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The Government deplore all violent crime and are undertaking an extensive programme of action to tackle it; this has the effect of preventing homicides since in many cases homicide results from the escalation of other kinds of violent crime.

The Government recently introduced the Violent Crime Reduction Bill which will introduce measures to tackle guns, knives and alcohol-related crime, all of which, again, will contribute to the prevention of homicide. The Bill contains measures which will tackle gun crime (such as introducing tougher manufacturing standards to ensure that imitation firearms cannot be converted to fire live ammunition), knife crime and binge drinking which can lead to very serious violent crime which may culminate in homicide.

There are record numbers of police officers to enforce the law—around 140,000—and 6,300 community support officers (CSOs) on our streets. The Government's approach has helped drive up detection rates for these crimes. Detection rates are high (98 per cent. for homicide in 2004–05) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) are continuing work to improve investigative methods and to spread good practice to ensure that offenders are detected, brought to justice and prevented from re-offending.

Licensing Act

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many senior police officers

expressed serious concerns to the Government about the Licensing Act 2003 when the consultation on the legislation was taking place. [20932]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

Nine representations were received from police bodies in response to the White Paper on licensing reform; these were placed in the Library of the House. Through the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the police were closely involved in formulating the 2003 Act; for example, ACPO has been part of the Advisory Group that met to discuss the Act regularly before and during the parliamentary stages of the Bill and since Royal Assent.

London Events (Criminal Offences)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many criminal offences occurred during the 2005 *(a)* Notting Hill Carnival, *(b)* Lord Mayor's Show and *(c)* Romford Carnival. [22948]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available from the Home Office recorded crime statistics.

Metropolitan Police

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he had with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police prior to his statement that command of the British Transport Police would transfer to the Metropolitan Police in the run-up to the Olympics; and for what reasons this information has not previously been communicated to Parliament. [22615]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* My right hon. friend the Home Secretary and the Metropolitan Police commissioner discussed the issue of police force structures at a recent bilateral meeting.

Responsibility for the British Transport Police falls to the Secretary of State for Transport rather than the Home Department. The Secretary of State for Transport announced to Parliament on 11 October that he would be reviewing the role of the British Transport Police. The review will:

> "examine the functions of the British Transport Police and whether some or all of these are best carried out by a national force, regional forces or, indeed, by the industry itself."

The terms of reference of the review are available in the House Library. Any decisions on the future of the British Transport Police would need to await the outcome of the review.

Multi-agency Public Protection

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases covered by the multi agency public protection arrangements on 31 March of each year between 2001 and 2005 fell into the *(a)* very high and *(b)* high risk category. [22784]

Fiona Mactaggart: The data are not available in the form requested. The latest data (covering 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005) on cases managed under the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) in each of the 42 police and probation areas in England and Wales were published on 17 October and copies have been placed in the Library of the House. The data in the reports reflect the management level required to manage the offender rather than the risk of harm presented.

Offenders may be managed within MAPPA at one of three levels which do not directly correspond to the level of risk of harm presented. Although risk is a key criterion, the management level is also determined by the complexity of the management plan required. The highest level of management is level 3. This year, for the first time, data relating to each of the three levels of management has been published and the following table has been compiled from each of the 42 area reports:

Number of MAPPA offenders 2004–05 by level of management required

Level of management	*Number of offenders*
Level 3	1,478
Level 2	11,288
Level 1	31,826
Total	44,592

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the principal offences committed by those persons covered by the multi-agency public protection arrangements are. [22785]

Fiona Mactaggart: The type of offence committed by each offender is not recorded centrally. The multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) are aimed at relevant sexual or violent offenders and other persons, who, by reason of offences committed by them (wherever committed), are considered to be persons who may cause serious harm to the public. The term "relevant sexual or violent offender" is defined in section 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and includes all serious sexual and violent offenders.

National Alcohol Strategy

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice his Department has given to key agencies on local delivery of the National Alcohol Strategy. [16730]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office has focused on the reduction of alcohol-related crime and disorder by working closely with other key Government Departments. Much of the strategy has been focused on implementation at a local level. We have worked with the police on the Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP) and two national Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns (AMEC).

These programmes targeted enforcement activity and partnership working in particular regions. We are also working closely with ODPM and their "How to" programme which is relevant to the development of the night-time economy, as part of the delivery of the cleaner, safer, greener communities initiative. We lead the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme jointly with the Department of Health, which has completed a national audit of available alcohol services and is developing a programme of improvements that will be implemented at a local level through primary care trusts.

National Mobile Phone Register

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how the National Mobile Phone Register is being advertised; and if he will make a statement; [21967]

(2) how many mobile telephones have been registered on the National Mobile Phone Register; and if he will make a statement. [21969]

Hazel Blears: The National Mobile Phone Register was launched in January 2005. At the time of the official launch there were already around 12 million items on the register.

By July 2005 there were 13,589,970 items on the register. (Items are regularly weeded out onto an archived database which consists of an additional million items.) It is estimated that, on average, 61,000 items are registered per week. At this stage around 20 per cent. of all handsets in the UK are registered. The National Mobile Phone Register is a product of our ongoing partnership work with the police and the mobile phone industry to tackle mobile phone theft. It is a valuable law enforcement tool, functioning as a key source of information for investigating allegations of mobile phone related crime. Members of the public can play their part and register their phones—for free—on www.immobilise.com. By registering they can protect their phones, increase their chances of getting them back if they are lost or stolen and help the police tackle mobile phone theft.

In terms of advertising the register, we are supporting the mobile phone industry and the police in their work to encourage registration through the Immobilise publicity campaign.

Notting Hill Carnival

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate the Metropolitan police have made of how many people attended the 2005 Notting Hill Carnival. [22949]

Paul Goggins: The Metropolitan Police Service estimate that 250,000 people attended the Notting Hill Carnival on Sunday 28 August, and 500,000 on Monday 29 August.

People Trafficking

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether West Midlands police have received specialised training in dealing with trafficking and trafficked women as specified in the Home Office toolkit. [22223]

Hazel Blears: The toolkit on trafficking of people provides generic information and practical advice to help front-line police, immigration officers and other professionals and agencies to identify promptly and accurately those who may be victims of trafficking and to deal with them appropriately. The toolkit is divided into easily accessible sections, not all of which will be relevant to all agencies, and is intended as an additional resource to support local operations. The type and level of training on human trafficking provided to police officers is a matter for individual police services.

Police

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much time police officers in Gravesham spent *(a)* on paper work and *(b)* on the beat in the last period for which figures are available. [20090]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Home Office. The Frontline Policing Measure for 2004–05 was published on 27 October 2005 and indicated that officers in Kent spent 67.6 per cent. of their time on front-line duties.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total level of *(a)* revenue and *(b)* capital balances held at the end of the last financial year was for each police authority; and what percentage of gross income this represented for each police force. [23936]

Hazel Blears: Estimates of revenue reserves and provisions at the end of the financial year 2004–05 are set out in the table. Details of capital reserves could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police authority	*Total estimated reserves/ provisions at 31 March 2005 (£000)*	*Estimated gross revenue expenditure 2004–05[1] (£000)*	*Reserves/ provisions as percentage of gross revenue expenditure*
Avon and Somerset	6,741	245,500	2.7
Bedfordshire	13,151	91,958	14.3
Cambridgeshire	9,083	116,444	7.8
Cheshire	11,114	159,289	7.0
City of London	1,340	81,704	1.6
Cleveland	7,622	117,790	6.5
Cumbria	7,076	94,090	7.5
Derbyshire	22,141	154,422	14.3
Devon and Cornwall	21,464	252,428	8.5
Dorset	16,712	109,992	15.2
Durham	12,034	115,586	10.4
Dyfed-Powys	10,636	84,477	12.6
Essex	32,844	252,838	13.0
Gloucestershire	3,669	97,873	3.7
Greater Manchester	39,850	532,778	7.5
Gwent	24,742	105,213	23.5
Hampshire	20,677	281,104	7.4
Hertfordshire	13,197	164,946	8.0
Humberside	17,975	168,518	10.7
Kent	22,818	281,424	8.1
Lancashire	21,549	251,052	8.6
Leicestershire	8,151	153,821	5.3
Lincolnshire	7,336	95,626	7.7
Merseyside	21,906	327,552	6.7
Metropolitan	186,275	2,800,978	6.7
Norfolk	11,411	139,793	8.2
Northamptonshire	11,489	108,998	10.5
Northumbria	80,947	282,290	28.7
North Wales	7,987	123,126	6.5
North Yorkshire	24,381	129,503	18.8
Nottinghamshire	18,170	172,974	10.5
South Wales	20,861	239,097	8.7
South Yorkshire	28,764	234,252	12.3
Staffordshire	9,646	173,691	5.6
Suffolk	10,758	105,524	10.2
Surrey	14,203	172,058	8.3
Sussex	26,057	257,669	10.1
Thames Valley	25,155	343,246	7.3
Warwickshire	n/a	81,984	n/a
West Mercia	11,451	182,128	6.3
West Midlands	57,630	506,240	11.4
West Yorkshire	26,735	407,692	6.6
Wiltshire	7,133	96,617	7.4

[1] Gross expenditure will be met partly from income (e.g. sales, fees, specific grants) and any use of balances and reserves. Revenue expenditure net of income is funded from Home Office Police Grant, RSG/NNDR and council tax precept.
Source:
Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA): Police Service Statistics—Estimates 2004–05.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list awards for bravery for police officers the receipt of which his Department has approved. [22400]

Hazel Blears: Police officers who perform acts of bravery may be nominated for a Queen's Award for Gallantry. There are four levels of award as listed in the table.

The George Cross is the highest level of recognition and is only awarded for acts of the greatest heroism in circumstances of extreme danger or conspicuous courage. The award is frequently awarded posthumously.

The George Medal is granted for gallantry of an extremely high order, where the act was one of great bravery.

The Queen's Gallantry Medal is awarded for gallantry of a high order, where the act was one of exemplary bravery.

The Queen's Commendation for Bravery is granted for an act of gallantry not up to the standards described above, but which entails a risk to life and which deserved national recognition.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the manning level of police officers in Hertfordshire was in 2004–05; and what the manning level will be in 2006–07. [22746]

Hazel Blears: At the end of March 2005 Hertfordshire constabulary had 2,104 full-time equivalent police officers, an increase of 18 in 2004–05. Future staffing levels are a matter for the Hertfordshire police authority arid will be determined by the budget the authority sets for the force in future years.

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he relied upon in making his decision on the creation of police forces with a minimum of 4,000 police officers in terms of *(a)* function and *(b)* financing. [23500]

Hazel Blears: The case for restructuring the police service in England and Wales to ensure that all forces have the capacity and resilience to deliver protective services to national standards was set out in HM inspectorate of constabulary's report 'Closing the Gap', published in September 2005. The report is available on HMIC's website at http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/docs/docs/closinggap.pdf.

Prison Service

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what resources the Prison Service has given for the detection and investigation of staff corruption in each of the last five years. [16385]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since February 2003 the public sector Prison Service has allocated specific resources to the detection, investigation, and prevention of staff corruption. Central records are not held detailing the exact, number of staff involved in this activity. However, each establishment is required to have a Local Professional Standards Manager who is supported at area level by an Area Professional Standards Manager.

In addition, there is a central Professional Standards Unit at HQ comprising 10 members of staff. Prison Service managers are assigned to conduct investigations into individual allegations of staff corruption as required.

Private Finance Initiative

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible create the minimum of environmental damage. [16182]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Guidance for Departments on how to include environmental considerations within private finance initiative (PFI) and projects is set out in Green Public Private Partnerships (PPP), issued in 2002. This added to guidance on PFI projects issued by the Treasury and supports commitments being developed under the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate.

A memorandum of understanding, signed by the Home Office Green Minister and the Director General of the Prison Service, requires all new prisons (including those constructed under PFI) to introduce a sustainable development policy and to be managed in an environmentally sound way.

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) certificates are obtained for major new buildings. The new Home Office in two Marsham street received the BREEAM excellent level certification of its design in June 2004. Excellent is the highest category certification. Operationally it is managed under an accredited environmental management system.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* sustainability and *(b)* environmental impacts of private finance initiative (PFI) projects within his Department; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the PFI process in delivering environmentally sustainable projects. [16183]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In line with the Government's overarching commitment, Departments need to consider all aspects of sustainable development when entering into new PFI/PPP contracts. By taking a long-term view, PFI/PPPs require an assessment of whole life costs and can promote a more efficient use of resources.

The Home Office is committed to targets set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. The biodiversity and energy sections of the Framework, published in August 2003 and February 2004 respectively require Departments to include clauses relating to sustainable development issues in relevant contracts, including PFIs. It is anticipated that future sections of the framework on waste, estates management and construction and procurement will cover similar provisions.

The Framework was to be reviewed in 2004–05 and further consideration will be given to how best Departments can take account of sustainable development in future PFI contracts. The Department's officials are

working closely with officials from OGC in order to ensure that the Framework is fully coordinated with OGC's Achieving Excellence construction procurement guidance, in particular with Achieving Excellence Guide 11: Sustainability, which is currently under development.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to make private finance initiative contracts for which his Department is responsible more accountable and transparent in terms of environmental sustainability. [16184]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In line with the Government's overarching commitment, Departments need to consider all aspects of sustainable development when entering into new PFI/PPP contracts. By taking a long term view, PFI/PPPs require an assessment of whole life costs and can promote a more efficient use of resources.

From 1 April 2004 the Home Department, along with all other Government Departments, have been required to explicitly identify any significant environmental and social costs and benefits, as well as economic costs and benefits, when carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). This will cover RIAs carried out on new PFI/PPP projects.

Railway Staff

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1080W, on railway staff, if he will define the nature of detection rates, with particular reference to what is being detected. [23014]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

The Home Office Counting Rules manual for Recorded Crime defines a crime as detected if:

1. A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime.

2. The offender (adult) has been cautioned by the police or (if a juvenile) issued with a final warning or reprimand.

3. The offender admits the crime and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court.

4. No further action has been taken by the police, which usually occurs if the offender is dead or severely ill or when an essential witness or victim is permanently ill.

The "detection rate" is calculated by dividing the number of detected crimes by the number of recorded crimes and multiplying by 100 to obtain a percentage.

A railway staff assault is any incident where, in circumstances related to their work, a member of staff is assaulted, threatened or abused, thereby affecting their health, safety or welfare.

Rape

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of reported rape cases in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland have involved the drug Ketamine. [22350]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with industry representatives on the provisions relating to encryption in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; what plans he has to bring the relevant section into force; and if he will make a statement. [20250]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Home Office officials have had a number of discussions with industry representatives about the encryption provisions in part III of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The Government will shortly publish for public consultation a draft code of practice on the operation of those provisions. An order to commence part III will be made once Parliament have approved the code of practice by a resolution of both Houses.

Road Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employers have been prosecuted in England and Wales for requiring their employees to use a hand held mobile phone while driving. [19045]

Paul Goggins: Regulation 110 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, which governs the use of mobile phones in a vehicle, came into effect on 1 December 2003. Regulation 110 (2) provides that no person shall cause or permit any other person to drive a motor vehicle on a road while that person is using a hand-held mobile phone. For 2003 the offence was not separately identifiable from other offences under Regulation 110. Data for 2004 will be available early in 2006.

Safer Neighbourhoods Scheme

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects the Safer Neighbourhoods scheme to be extended to every ward in every borough by 2006; what funding has been allocated for the scheme; and whether additional *(a)* police and *(b)* community support officers will need to be recruited. [22397]

Hazel Blears: The Safer Neighbourhoods programme is an initiative of the Metropolitan Police Service (MRS) in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the Mayor of London. It is for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to ensure roll-out in agreement with his police authority and with the mayor. Funding is a matter for the mayor and the police authority through central Government grant, precept on local authorities and national non-domestic rate.

The Home Office provides funding towards increases in numbers of community support officers (CSOs). In 2005–06, this is estimated to be £21 million for the MPS. The MPA also attracts funding from other partners, such as Transport for London and a number of London boroughs. The Government are increasing the money available to support further increases in CSOs through the Neighbourhood Policing Fund and this will impact on London as elsewhere. Details of this will be decided shortly. The Government have made a commitment that

by 2008, every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams.

The number of police officers in the Metropolitan Police District (up 5,000 in five years) and nationally is at a record high. It is for the Commissioner to determine how to deploy them.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department have been on attachment *(a)* from and *(b)* to biosecurity companies in the last three years, broken down by company. [20503]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Attachments are part of the Interchange initiative, which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the civil service and other organisations—public, private and voluntary. Interchange provides opportunities for civil servants to learn new skills, widen their experience and develop their ideas. It also brings in skills and experience from other sectors. There have been no staff in the Home Department on attachment to or from biosecurity companies in the past three years.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions young people have been handcuffed in each of the secure training centres in each of the last six months. [22303]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is given in the table.

Number of occasions young people handcuffed in STCs

	Hassockfield	*Oakhill*	*Medway*	*Rainsbrook*
April	1	2	0	0
May	2	2	0	0
June	1	1	0	0
July	11	4	0	0
August	10	6	0	0
September	4	2	0	0

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many secure training centres were included in the review of restraint in secure training centres. [22305]

Fiona Mactaggart: The review involved the Prison Service national instructors in Physical Control in Care visiting all three of the centres then in operation (Hassockfield, Medway and Rainsbrook) and producing proposals for change to a review panel of independent experts.

Senior Officers (Transport)

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many senior officers are provided with transport for *(a)* business and *(b)* private use, broken down by rank, in each police force in England and Wales. [23935]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Serious Fraud Office

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 631W, on the Serious Fraud Office, whether all parties have now agreed the revised version of the memorandum of understanding; and if he will make a statement. [22783]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 28 October 2005]*: The revised version of the memorandum of understanding is still to be finally agreed by all parties. The Home Office is co-ordinating this task and expects the revised version to be agreed shortly. The current version of the MOU is available on request, and the revised version will be placed in the Library.

Terrorism Act

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he collates on terrorist suspects. [21722]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The police and security service are responsible for collecting information on terrorist suspects. The Home Office do not routinely collect detailed information on all terrorist cases, but does keep some records, particularly regarding individuals subject to criminal, immigration, extradition or other judicial action and to facilitate work with other departments. Statistics on arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the report published by the reviewer of the Terrorism Act 2000 are available on the Home Office website.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the organisations, causes, or movements that each of the people so far convicted of offences under the Terrorism Act 2000 were associated with. [19402]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Most offences in the Terrorism Act 2000 do not rely on a link with a proscribed organisation. Such a link is necessary only in respect of the offences in sections 11 to 13, and even in such cases, the particular proscribed organisation involved is not expressly reflected in the indictment. Accordingly, the information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Violent Incidents

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate his Department has made of the number of violent incidents which resulted in injuries caused by glasses or glass bottles in 2004–05. [23559]

Hazel Blears: Estimates of the proportion of violent incidents that involve use of a glass or bottle based on the 2004–05 British crime survey (BCS) will be published shortly. However, available data from the 2003–04 BCS indicates that a glass or bottle is used as a weapon in 5 per cent. of violent incidents.

Volunteering

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the Volunteer Recruitment Fund remains unallocated; and if he will make a statement. [21973]

Paul Goggins: None of the Volunteer Recruitment Fund remains unallocated. The total allocation in 2004–05 and 2005–06 is £3,985,861.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17875]

Mr. Charles Clarke: These figures are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of the publication Think Smart ... Think Voluntary Sector; and if he will make a statement. [21974]

Paul Goggins: The cost of printing Think Smart ... Think Voluntary Sector was £5,182. The publication promotes good practice in contractual arrangements with the voluntary and community sector.

The Government are committed to a strong and thriving voluntary and community sector, and ensuring its role in public service reform. Think Smart ... Think Voluntary Sector aims to highlight the value of and opportunities for working with the sector. It also addresses the barriers it can face in dealing with public sector bodies. A better funding relationship will help voluntary and community sector organisations to be more effective and achieve better value for money.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the 2005 Year of the Volunteer campaign; and if he will make a statement. [21968]

Paul Goggins: The Year of the Volunteer 2005 has been a successful celebration of the contribution made by volunteers, with over 1,000 events organised during the Year so far. The Year has been led by the voluntary and community sector and early indications are that the sector plans to repeat the 'Environment' and 'Health' theme months in 2006. We are commissioning an independent research organisation to conduct a review of the Year which we hope will be completed by March of next year.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visitors have visited the 2005 Year of the Volunteer campaign website www.yearofthevolunteer.org, broken down by month; what the cost has been of this website; and if he will make a statement. [21970]

Paul Goggins: 260,735 people have visited the Year of the Volunteer 2005 website during the year. The details are given in table one. The figures reflect, in particular, the very popular Special Constables recruitment campaign in the spring and the launch of the 'Billion Minutes' campaign in the summer. The total cost of the website (projected to 31 December 2005) is approximately £67,400.

Table 1: Breakdown of page views, visits and visitors to the Year of the Volunteer 2005 website, broken down by month

Date	*Page views*	*Visits*	*Visitors*
2005			
January	24,545	11,922	11,240
February	75,664	22,612	21,051
March	238,376	66,340	62,542
April	103,448	27,716	26,093
May	87,417	23,011	21,725
June	111,491	32,435	30,527
July	128,833	35,423	33,285
August	176,678	30,456	28,592
September	156,118	27,085	25,680
Total	1,102,570	277,000	260,735
Average	122,508	30,778	28,971

Note:
One single review shows you how often visitors look at specific pages on your website, in how many visits and by how many visitors.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the expenditure by his Department was on the 2005 Year of the Volunteer campaign; and if he will make a statement. [21971]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office expenditure for the Year of the Volunteer 2005 is £7.1 million The details of how this has been allocated is given in the table. Volunteering is a devolved issue and expenditure listed is England-wide only.

The Home Office expenditure for the Year of the Volunteer follows at table 1.

Table 1: Home Office investment into YV05

	Amount invested by the Home Office (£)	*Policy initiatives*
Community Service Volunteers	1,000,000	Principal Voluntary Sector partner delivering a range of activities, events, promotional materials and press and media coverage
Community Service Volunteers	500,000	To deliver a government employee volunteering scheme
Volunteering England	1,000,000	Principal Voluntary Sector partner working with a consortium to deliver a range of activities, events, promotional materials and press and media coverage
Volunteering England	3,000,000	To increase the capacity of local volunteer centres throughout England
Volunteering England	250,000	Small grants programme for other stakeholders who can contribute to achieving the objectives of YOV 2005
Marketing/Communications Support	250, 000	Research and branding, publicity, partnership marketing and the YOV 2005 website (www.yearofthevolunteer.org)

Table 1: Home Office investment into YV05

	Amount invested by the Home Office (£)	*Policy initiatives*
Website and YOV 2005 evaluation support	100,000	To develop and enhance www.yearofthevolunteer.org and manage project evaluation
Media Trust	1,000,000	For high-profile, multi-media consumer marketing campaign which aims to supercharge the year, raise awareness of volunteering and drive registrations of new volunteers
Total	7,100,000	

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

EU Rebate

14. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in negotiations with his EU partners regarding the UK budget rebate. [23255]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are committed to reaching a deal at the December European Council. Our position on the abatement remains as set out by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister before this House on 20 June 2005.

Turkey

15. **Meg Hillier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the timetable is for Turkey's potential accession to the EU. [23256]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Before accession to the EU, Turkey must align its legislation to meet EU standards in 35 chapters of the acquis communitaire. The timescale of the negotiations will depend on progress in doing so. But, the EU and Turkey are both agreed that accession negotiations are likely to take at least 10 years.

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely time scale for Turkish accession to the EU. [23262]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Before accession to the EU, Turkey must align its legislation to meet EU standards in 35 chapters of the acquis communitaire. The time scale of the negotiations will depend on progress in doing so. But, the EU and Turkey are both agreed that accession negotiations are likely to take at least 10 years.

Earthquake (Subcontinent)

16. **Kitty Ussher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the governments of India and Pakistan on lifting the line of control following the recent earthquake. [23257]

Dr. Howells: We shall be making clear to the Governments of India and Pakistan that we welcome their decision on 30 October to open five crossing points on the Line of Control for the delivery of humanitarian relief to those affected by the earthquake and to allow people to cross on foot, with the correct permits.

British Council

17. **Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the role that the British Council plays in promoting UK-based education programmes, with particular reference to engineering. [23258]

Ian Pearson: The British Council's Education UK Partnership helps UK education providers recruit overseas students for all the subjects they offer, including engineering. In 2003–04, 325,760 overseas students studied in higher education establishments in the UK. Of these, 15,310 were engineering students. This represents a 2.7 per cent. increase in engineering students on the previous year.

[2003–04 is the latest year figures are available. Figures include students from the EU]

Afghanistan

18. **Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the outcome of the recent parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. [23259]

Dr. Howells: The 18 September Afghan parliamentary and provincial elections represent a remarkable achievement for Afghanistan. The elections went relatively smoothly and there were no major security incidents. Voter turnout is estimated to be 6.8 million (53 per cent.), of which 43 per cent. were women who will be strongly represented in the new Parliament. The Electoral Complaints Commission is investigating allegations of fraud but we understand these are unlikely to significantly affect the final outcome.

The new Afghan Parliament is expected to convene on 19 December.

Iraq

19. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the UN Security Council to make a decision on extending the mandate for the multinational force in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [23260]

Dr. Howells: The United Kingdom and United States will circulate a draft resolution to the Security Council this November

At the request of the Iraqi Transitional Government, the resolution will seek to extend the mandate for the Multi-National Forces in Iraq, the Development Fund for Iraq and its International Advisory and Monitoring Board.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will quantify the *(a)* benefits and *(b)* disbenefits that have been accrued by the UK following the participation in the Iraqi invasion. [21899]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The decision to take military action against Iraq was not taken lightly. Whatever past divisions there have been over the decision to take military action, there is now a broad international consensus, expressed in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, that we and the rest of the international community should work with the Iraqi Government to help achieve a democratic, secure and prosperous Iraq, which poses no threat to its neighbours. We will not be in a position to quantify what benefits and disbenefits have accrued to the UK until our job in helping the Iraqi people is done. It is clear, however, that if the UK with the international community maintain their commitment to the goal of a democratic, secure and prosperous Iraq, there will be net benefit to the British people.

The Iraqi political process goes forward. The Iraqi people's enthusiastic participation in the January elections and the constitutional referendum on 15 October demonstrates Iraqis' appetite for a democratic process which can deliver accountable and effective government.

On reconstruction, the Iraqis are in the lead on coordinating donor support. The UK is playing its part. The Department for International Development has so far committed more than £417 million to humanitarian and reconstruction in Iraq, and has spent more than £275 million. There have been significant achievements despite all the challenges: there is a stable economy with low inflation; more power is generated; more people have access to drinking water and sewerage systems; there has been a decline in disease rates for malaria, polio, measles, and mumps; an independent media is flourishing; and 2,500 NGOs are registered with the Iraq Transitional Government.

The UK is working closely with the Iraqis and with Coalition partners to rebuild Iraq's security institutions. We currently run projects to rebuild Iraq's military, police and the prison services in the South East of Iraq, and projects to increase the governance capacity of the Ministry of the Interior in Baghdad. We are doing all we can, along with the rest of the international community, to support the Iraqi security forces in their efforts to improve their capacity and effectiveness in tackling the security situation.

Clearly our commitment has not been without cost to us, both in strict resource terms but also, most importantly, in terms of British lives lost. I very much regret the loss of life among British forces (and the multi-national force more broadly) and among Iraqi civilians. The overwhelming reason people are dying in Iraq is because terrorists are killing them. There is no 100 per cent. reliable and accurate assessment of casualties in Iraq. What is clear is that any civilian death, in whatever circumstances, is one too many.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list opinion surveys of the Iraqi people conducted with United Kingdom financial support in the last 12 months. [23828]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has funded one public opinion survey in Iraq in the last 12 months. The survey was carried out in seven cities in November 2004. The survey sought information on Iraqis' views on the democratic transition process, the proposed January 2005 elections, their employment status and their media consumption.

Democracy Promotion

20. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the role of the UK Government in promoting democracy around the world. [23261]

Ian Pearson: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has said, "promoting democracy has to be at the heart of our foreign policy". We actively support the development of democratic institutions around the world so that all people should have Governments which are effective, accountable and representative.

State Visit (Chinese Premier)

22. **Mr. Hunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the forthcoming state visit of the Chinese premier. [23263]

Ian Pearson: The visit of President Hu Jintao reaffirms our bilateral relationship with China, which is becoming an increasingly important international player. President Hu's programme in London will include meetings with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Democrats to discuss and take forward co-operation in a range of bilateral and international issues.

Middle East

23. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last made representations to the Israeli Government concerning the building of settlements on the west bank. [23264]

Dr. Howells: We have made our concerns on continuing settlement activity clear with the Israeli Government at all levels, and will continue to do so. Most recently I set out our position on settlement activity in the west bank in meetings with Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom and Housing Minister Herzog, during my visit to Israel in September.

WTO Talks

24. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with other EU Foreign Ministers about the World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong in December. [23265]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The World Trade Organisation ministerial in Hong Kong is a vital staging post towards concluding the current round of WTO negotiations. We want an ambitious, pro-development outcome. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary chaired a discussion on the WTO negotiations at a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers on 18 October, which I attended. Member states confirmed their support for Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson in negotiating a successful, balanced outcome.

Automated Signing Machines

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he or *(b)* any other Minister in his Department uses (i) an automated signing machine and (ii) a stamp for ministerial correspondence purposes. [19873]

Mr. Straw: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers do not use stamps or automated signing machines in place of signing ministerial correspondence. All replies to ministerial correspondence are cleared by the answering Minister before being issued and should be signed by them personally.

Electronic signatures are held, but only used in exceptional circumstances, for example if a Minister clears a reply while overseas and wishes it to issue before his or her return. A Private Secretary may in similar circumstances sign a letter on behalf of their Minister, but I aim to keep such occasions to a minimum.

Guidance on handling ministerial correspondence is set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments', copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Chevening Scholarships

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Chevening scholarships his Department has awarded this year; how many students have been unable to take-up these scholarships as a consequence of their Government withdrawing their passports; and if he will make a statement. [20403]

Mr. Straw: We expect the total number of Chevening scholarship and fellowship awards for 2005–06 to be in the region of 2,000. However, these awards are only now being processed. It will be some months before an exact figure is available. I know of only one case of a new scholar being unable to take up their Chevening award this year as a consequence of a Government withdrawing their passport. I refer to the reply by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs (Ian Pearson), gave the hon. Member on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 465W.

China

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on China's international relations, with particular reference to Taiwan. [23253]

Ian Pearson: China is playing an increasingly active and important role in the world. China's growing influence can be felt regionally and internationally; its emergence provides both opportunities as well as challenges. We engage in regular high-level dialogue with the Chinese Government on a range of international issues. The next opportunity will be of course the forthcoming state visit later this month.

On Taiwan, we urge both sides to avoid unilateral measures that might raise tension. Our view is that the Taiwan issue is one to be settled by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.

There have been tentative but welcome signs of a reduction in cross-strait tensions. For example, over the Chinese new year there were direct cross-strait charter flights, the first time in 50 years. And earlier this year Taiwanese opposition party leaders made landmark visits to China. Since then a number of other initiatives have followed such as the lifting of certain agricultural tariffs, the opening up of tourism, reduction of tuition fees for students from Taiwan studying in China and Taiwanese carrier over-flights. Additionally, Taiwan has permitted RMB currency exchanges on the surrounding islands of Kinmen and Matsu.

We welcome efforts by both sides to lower tensions and to find a mutually acceptable basis for resumption of peaceful dialogue.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the EU arms embargo in relation to China; and if he will make a statement. [22219]

Ian Pearson: We are continuing discussions with EU partners on the modernisation of arms export controls, including the review of the arms embargo on China imposed in 1989.

Colombia

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received a request from the Colombian Government for assistance from the UK *(a)* police and *(b)* armed forces in training their security forces to deal with improvised explosive devices. [23351]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The UK has not received any recent request from the Colombian Government for assistance in training on Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD). However, the British Army is already involved with the Colombian security forces in a programme of ongoing Explosive Ordnance Disposal training, which covers IEDD.

As well as aiming to reduce the number of deaths, both civilian and military, from explosive devices, our training endeavours to introduce Colombian military personnel to British defence concepts in key areas such as Rules of Engagement and democratic and accountable control of the armed forces.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [22440]

Ian Pearson: The security situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has improved since 2004, but areas of instability remain, particularly in the east. In Ituri and the Kivus, the security situation remains fragile, with civilians continuing to suffer abuses by armed groups.

Despite the UN Peacekeeping Mission (MONUC)'s operations to disarm Ituri militias and to disrupt the activities of the Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), these militia groups continue to

persecute civilians. We continue to support MONUC's robust approach to protecting civilians and tackling armed groups in Ituri, which they should replicate in the Kivus. We have urged regional governments to work together to disarm these groups.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of mercenary activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [22441]

Ian Pearson: The UN Panel's final report on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources of 28 October 2003 and the reports of the UN group of experts on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) arms embargo identified that foreign individuals have been and continue to be paid to play a military role or provide assistance to armed groups in the DRC.

We continue to urge regional governments to work together with the UN Peacekeeping Mission (MONUC) to disarm militias and foreign armed groups and we support MONUC's efforts to disarm these groups and to prevent weapons from reaching them.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22461]

Mr. Straw: The energy consumption in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) UK estate (including Wilton Park) in the last five years is:

kWh

	Energy consumption
2000–01	33,331,523.00
2001–02	29,899,666.67
2002–03	31,025,558.60
2003–04	32,555,363.00
2004–05	32,835,032.00

The cost of energy consumed in the FCO UK estate (including Wilton Park) in the last five years is:

£

	Energy consumed
2000–01	1,722,755.70
2001–02	1,747,318.10
2002–03	1,526,771.65
2003–04	1,590,500.74
2004–05	1,809,317.95

The FCO has recently committed to a series of projects, valued at approximately £250,000, designed to make the estate more energy efficient. This will reduce energy consumption from 2006–07, and reduce expenditure on energy in real terms. Effective payback for the project is expected within three years.

The overseas estate figures have been excluded as the estate is extremely diverse and widespread. As a consequence collating such information could be achieved only at disproportionate cost.

Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when and in which publications the post of Ambassador to the Holy See will be advertised. [22300]

Mr. Straw: The post of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See was advertised in the following publications:

The Economist on 22 July 2005

The Guardian and The Guardian Web page on 20 July 2005

The Daily Telegraph on 21 July 2005

The Independent on 21 July 2005

The Times on 19 July 2005

The Financial Times on 21 July 2005

This recruitment campaign has now closed. We expect to make an announcement concerning the appointment of the new Ambassador to the Holy See in due course.

Queen's Speech

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which occasions over the past 30 years a state visit has not been referred to in the Queen's Speech prior to the visit; and if he will make a statement. [22229]

Mr. Straw: On one occasion the State Visit by the Chinese President Hu Jintao which will take place between November 8 and 10. The visit was not announced in Her Majesty the Queen's Speech last May as the possibility of the visit was still under discussion and dates had not been agreed. There are no such other examples in recent years of which I am aware.

Raul Fernandes

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the reasons for Raul Fernandes dismissal from his employment at the British embassy in Dubai on 5 March 2002. [19370]

Mr. Straw: Mr Fernandes is in dispute with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about events relating to his dismissal from the British embassy in Dubai on 5 March 2002. We cannot comment on the case pending the outcome of current legal proceedings.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on commercial prostitution in the camps in Darfur. [22486]

Ian Pearson: There are anecdotal reports that commercial sex is on the rise within the camps for internally displaced persons in Darfur. However, at present, there is little verifiable evidence of this practice. A number of agencies in the humanitarian community are trying to gain more understanding on what seems to

be a growing spread of illegal activities in the camps, including prostitution, and of the tolerance of the local authorities to this problem.

We have made clear that all humanitarian staff of the UN and non-governmental organisations in Darfur should commit to the principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's code of conduct on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

UK Presidency

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on reform of the European Union institutions under the UK presidency of the European Union. [23254]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made clear, the Government have focussed during the UK presidency of the EU on taking forward a wider debate about the future direction of the EU rather than looking once again at their institutional architecture. The Informal Summit at Hampton Court has helped the EU to find new ways to meet the challenge of globalisation better. In that context the UK will continue to advocate positive reforms of the EU institutions where necessary.

HEALTH

Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps the Government are taking to ensure that complementary allergy practitioners are properly *(a)* regulated and *(b)* inspected; and if she will make a statement; [19712]

(2) what steps the Government have taken to ensure parents and legal guardians are appropriately trained and informed on how EpiPens should be used; and if she will make a statement; [19713]

(3) what research the Government have commissioned on changes in numbers of allergy sufferers in the last five years; [19752]

(4) what steps she is taking to improve the level of *(a)* training in and *(b)* awareness of allergies of health professionals who work in (i) primary and (ii) secondary health care; and if she will make a statement; [19761]

(5) what steps she is taking to improve *(a)* access to and *(b)* information about specialist allergy treatment; and if she will make a statement. [19764]

Mr. Byrne: Primary care trusts, in partnership with local stakeholders, are responsible for determining which health services their local population requires and ensuring the provision of these services.

In its response to the Health Select Committee on the provision of allergy services, the Government undertook to carry out a review of the available data and research on the epidemiology of allergic conditions, the demand for and provision of treatment and the effectiveness of relevant interventions. This review, which is being overseen by the chief medical officer and is due to report by June 2006, will inform decisions about what steps could be taken to address any service gaps and pressures that are revealed by the review.

The Government recognise that one of the key determinants of the quality of patient care is that health professionals have an appropriate level of skills and knowledge. Addressing the training needs of health professionals is, however, the responsibility of the appropriate regulatory bodies. They set standards for the pre-registration training of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals, approve the education institutions that provide the training and determine the curricula.

Post-registration training needs for national health service staff are decided against local NHS priorities, through appraisal processes and training needs analyses informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service. Local authorities and health service providers decide how best to provide services to meet the needs of the individuals.

We have not commissioned research into the rise in incidence of allergic conditions. The independent allergy charity, Allergy UK, estimates that allergic conditions affects approximately one in four of the United Kingdom population at some time in their lives, with the numbers affected increasing by five per cent. each year.

The Government place great importance on protecting the public from potentially unsafe practitioners, and intends to take forward statutory regulation of herbal medicine and acupuncture. We encourage other currently unregulated complementary practitioners to develop their own unified systems of voluntary self-regulation. The Department have awarded a grant of £900,000 over the next three years to the Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health to work with a range of complementary health care professions to develop a voluntary self-regulation scheme.

Responsibility for educating parents and legal guardians in the use EpiPens rests with prescribing health professional. Doctors, pharmacists and other health care professionals should support parents and carers in providing information about medicines and promoting the use of information resources such as www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/

Asthma

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that every person with asthma has a personal asthma plan. [19646]

Mr. Byrne: We have no plans to ensure that every person with asthma has a personal asthma plan. However, we have a public service agreement target to improve health outcomes for people with long-term conditions by offering a personalised care plan for vulnerable people most at risk—this would include some asthma sufferers.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2146W, on avian influenza, if she will provide a breakdown of the £200 million allocation by major cost area. [20465]

Caroline Flint: The majority of our money has been spent on purchasing antivirals. The remaining expenditure includes the cost of our communication strategy and the tender for H5N1 vaccine.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take to prevent the possible transfer of avian influenza to humans from the spreading of chicken manure as fertiliser. [22600]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

As laid out in the Diseases of Poultry (England) Order of 2003, if there is an outbreak of avian influenza, then controls would be put in place around the infected premises. In the Protection Zone, which extends for a minimum of 3 km around the premises, no used litter or poultry manure may be removed from or spread on any premises. In the Surveillance Zone, which extends for a

minimum of 10 km around the infected premises, used litter and poultry manure are not to be moved outside the Zone. Manure and litter considered to be a risk from the infected premises will be treated or disposed of safely.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she has issued on the vaccination of poultry workers against influenza. [22616]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* This has been considered by the joint committee for vaccination and immunisation at their most recent meeting in October. It was agreed that poultry workers should be added to the seasonal influenza list if avian influenza was present in the United Kingdom. Arrangements have been made for poultry workers involved in culling to receive priority for antivirals if required.

Bathing Adaptations/Equipment

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department provides to local authorities on the provision of bathing adaptations and equipment; and what criteria are applied to decide an individual's medical need to bath. [20018]

Mr. Byrne: The integrated community equipment services (ICES) team produced guidance to local authorities on the provision of bathing adaptations and equipment. The guidance can be found on the ICES website at http://www.icesdoh.org/article.asp?Topic=82.

An individual's medical need to bathe is a matter for the local health and social care providers to determine.

Cancer Treatment

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding the Government have allocated to research into the mental health problems suffered by cancer patients as a result of cancer treatments in each of the last five years. [17781]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by national health service organisations. These organisations account for their use of the allocations they receive from the Department in an annual research and development report. The reports identify total, aggregated expenditure on national priority areas, including cancer. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

The Department has funded a number of cancer research studies in which a quality of life assessment forms an integral part. These include a current, £180,000 project entitled, "Mental health needs in patients with advanced cancer—implications for primary health care Teams". Details of the other projects can be found on the international cancer research portfolio database on www.cancerportfolio.org.

Care Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many care homes for older people *(a)* exceeded, *(b)* met, *(c)* almost met and *(d)* failed to meet (i) standard 12 and (ii) standard 15 of the national minimum standards for each year for which figures are available. [20714]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

	4 (exceeded)		*3 (met)*		*2 (almost met)*		*1 (failed to meet)*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
2002–03								
Standard 12	589	6	6,163	66	2,217	24	370	4
Standard 15	657	7	6,641	71	1,807	19	232	2
2003–04								
Standard 12	949	8	8,093	70	2,164	19	365	3
Standard 15	989	8	8,611	73	1,912	16	266	2
2004–05								
Standard 12	922	8	7,758	69	2,204	20	351	3
Standard 15	942	8	8,259	73	1,842	16	255	2

Source:
Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2655W, on care homes, what criteria were used in setting 31 December as the compliance date. [20669]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the Chief Inspector of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), that, due to the uncertainty among providers over which date in 2005 the requirement relating to national vocational qualification level two target should be met, CSCI believed it would be fairest to give providers the maximum time possible, by setting 31 December 2005 as the compliance date.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* unitary and *(b)* metropolitan local authorities have received claims for compensation for (i) sexual and (ii) physical abuse arising out of residence in care homes and residential schools; [19946]

(2) which local authorities have received claims for compensation for *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse arising out of residence in (i) care homes and (ii) residential schools; and what the total value of such claims is in respect of each authority; [19947]

(3) how much has been paid to claimants by local authorities for *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse arising out of residence in (i) care homes and (ii) residential schools since 1992. [19948]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally.

Information on residential schools is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Department for Education and Skills.

Carers

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment is made of the performance of local authorities in meeting the needs of carers; and if she will make a statement. [19660]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's current performance assessment framework (PAF) includes an indicator—AO/D42—reflecting the number of assessments and reviews of carers' needs undertaken by each council. Information showing the results for 2003–04 has been placed in the Library.

However, we recognise that these figures do not give us the full picture of how carers' needs may be met. We have therefore developed a new PAF indicator with the Commission for Social Care Inspection, which will record the number of carers who receive services as a result of a carer's assessment. The first set of data will be available in December 2005.

Cataract Operations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting time for cataract operations is in each primary care trust. [19018]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available centrally. However, the maximum wait for cataract operations is now three months.

Child Vaccinations

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate of child vaccinations is; and what assessment she has made of the factors which lead some parents not to have children vaccinated. [19992]

Caroline Flint: Information about the uptake of childhood immunisations is published annually in the national health service statistical bulletins. The latest bulletin, "NHS Immunisation Statistics, England: 2004–05", is available in the Library and on the Department's website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/PublicationsStatisticsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4119649&chk=r6rlW4

Quarterly figures on uptake of childhood immunisations are published routinely and available on the Health Protection Agency website at:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/vaccination/cover_sha.htm

The most recent quarterly figures are for the period April to June 2005.

Since 1991, the Department has commissioned a twice yearly survey to understand parents' knowledge of immunisation, attitudes towards immunisation and experience of immunisation services. Since the start of the survey more than 25,000 parents—mostly mothers—have been questioned and their responses fed back into the programme. Our results suggest that mothers are more strongly influenced by the perceived risk of a vaccine, rather than assessing the overall risks/benefits of vaccinating or not vaccinating their child. This is be because mothers are no longer aware of the risk from the diseases that vaccination protects against.

Chronic Conditions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in improving services for those with chronic conditions. [20061]

Mr. Byrne: "Supporting People with Long Term Conditions—an NHS and Social Care Model", was published in January 2005. Since this publication primary care trusts, supported by strategic health authorities, are working in partnership with local authorities to develop robust improvement plans for taking this forward, with an initial focus on implementing the case management approach to care.

Cued Speech

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to publicise and encourage the use of cued speech among the parents of deaf babies. [22159]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

It is not Governments place to recommend one particular form of communication with deaf babies and children. Through the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme it seeks to empower parents of hearing impaired children so that they can make informed choices about early communication and support options.

The Newborn Hearing Screening Programme has greatly improved the early identification of hearing impairments. This has enabled local services to provide earlier support and appropriate interventions, and parents to get the best information on local options. The screening programme also aims to improve practice throughout services. It works alongside other wider DfES initiatives such as the Early Support Programme.

The Early Support Programme aims to improve the services for disabled children aged 0 to 3 years and their families and has been operating since May 2002. It has produced a Monitoring Protocol for Deaf Babies and Children which, for the first time, offers a national resource to track development and progress over the first 3 years or so after identification of deafness.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children have been registered with a dentist in each year since 1997; and what percentage in each case was registered with

a dentist (i) operating under general dental service contracts and (ii) operating under personal dental service contracts. [18381]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the estimated percentages of children, adults and the total population who are registered with general dental services (GDS) dentists and personal dental services (PDS) dentists at the end of March 2005 for each year since 1997 has been placed in the Library.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of five-year-olds have no decayed, filled or missing teeth, according to the latest British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry Survey of the dental caries experience of five-year-old children, in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust. [19706]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The percentage of five-year-old children in England with no decayed, missing or filled teeth in the 2003–04 survey was 61.3 per cent.

The British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry survey data by strategic health authority and primary care trust has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of the population was registered with an NHS dentist in *(a)* England, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Lancaster and Wyre in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [20482]

(2) how many patients have been registered with an NHS dentist in Lancaster and Wyre constituency in each year since 1997. [20484]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the percentage of the population in England and Lancashire registered with a national health service dentist is shown in table 1.

Population data is not available by constituency area, but dental registration figures for Lancashire and Wyre are shown in table 2.

Table 1: Percentage of population registered with a NHS dentists in England, Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trusts (PCTs) as at 30 September in each year

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]	2005[1,2]
England	56	49	49	50	49	49	49	48	48
Of which:									
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	55	50	51	51	50	50	49	49	48
Blackburn with Darwen PCT	60	52	55	55	54	54	52	50	45
Blackpool PCT	61	53	55	55	55	54	52	51	51
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	58	52	52	50	40	39	40	43	41
Carlisle and District PCT	57	57	54	56	58	56	54	56	55
Chorley and South Ribble PCT	46	42	44	45	46	48	47	50	51
Eden Valley PCT	51	44	42	40	40	38	42	35	37
Fylde PCT	64	58	60	60	57	58	57	69	70
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	51	44	45	44	43	41	42	37	28
Morecambe Bay PCT	55	50	51	52	52	52	50	48	48
Preston PCT	58	53	52	51	47	47	47	48	51
West Cumbria PCT	52	49	54	56	56	57	54	48	50
West Lancashire PCT	51	45	46	48	46	48	49	51	56
Wyre PCT	62	57	58	60	63	62	62	63	57

[1] 2004 and 2005 data includes general dental service and personal dental service (PDS) registrations/PDS patients seen (counts patients seen in the past 15 months for some PDS schemes).
[2] 2005 data per population has been calculated on 2003 population data, as this is the most up to date available.
Note:
For 1997–2000, population has been calculated on 2001 population data, as this is the only population data available.
Source:
Dental Practice Board and Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Table 2: Number of patients registered in Lancaster and Wyre constituency as at 30 September 1997 to 2005

	Number of patients registered
1997	69,806
1998	65,986
1999	65,061
2000	65,133
2001	61,082
2002	58,430
2003	57,631
2004	56,873
2005	58,426

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists were practising in *(a)* Lancaster and Wyre constituency and *(b)* England per head of population in each year since 1997. [20483]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the number of national health service dentists practising in Lancaster and Wyre and in England. Population data are not available by parliamentary constituency, but the table includes comparable information on NHS dentists by head of population for Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and for England.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS)—number of dentists and dentists per population in England and the specified areas as at 30 September each year

Number of dentists

	1997	1998	1999	2000
England	16,815	17,338	17,863	18,241
Lancaster and Wyre constituency	45	45	46	43
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	651	671	682	669

Number of dentists

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
England	18,758	18,979	19,295	19,754	20,857
Lancaster and Wyre constituency	44	46	43	45	54
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	693	684	690	726	791

Dentists per population

	1997	1998	1999	2000
England	2,894	2,816	2,745	2,699
Lancaster and Wyre constituency	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	2,918	2,834	2,784	2,843

Dentists per population

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
England	2,636	2,616	2,584	2,536	2,402
Lancaster and Wyre constituency	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	2,749	2,793	2,781	2,658	2,440

n/a = not available—population data at constituency area are not available.

Notes:

1. The dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts are excluded from the data.
2. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Parliamentary constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.
3. 2005 data per population have been calculated using 2004 population data, as these are the most up to date available.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on waiting times for NHS dental appointments. [22620]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Waiting times for appointments at a high street dental surgery are at the discretion of the dentist according to clinical need.

From April 2006, the national health service will be implementing a major programme of dental reforms. Primary care trusts will have responsibility for the local commissioning of dental services, which will help improve access to dental services.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were treated by *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private dentists in (i) 2005 and (ii) 1997. [22622]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The total number of recorded courses of treatment by national health service dentists in the general dental service and personal dental service in England for the years requested are:

Financial year ending March 2005: 33.018 million;

Financial year ending March 1997: 28.617 million.

Some patients have more than one course of treatment.

We do not collect data on the numbers of patients treated privately by dentists.

Diet

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the level of pesticides used on fruit provided to school children through five-a-day related schemes. [19004]

Caroline Flint: A continuous programme of testing for pesticide residues has been established for products supplied under the school fruit and vegetable scheme (SFVS) and all sources are tested before they are included in the scheme. The results are reviewed regularly to ensure they comply with the statutory maximum residue levels (MRLs) in place in the United Kingdom. To test the effectiveness of these results the Department has commissioned an ongoing programme to determine any inaccuracies found in the primary test. The programme is managed with the support of the pesticides safety directorate which reviews the results via the Pesticide Residues Committee and publishes them on its website.

The Food Standards Agency and the Pesticides Residues Committee have confirmed that the residues found on fruit and vegetables provided under the scheme are neither of concern for children's health nor consumer health generally. MRLs are set taking into account consumption relative to body weight for different age groups including children. The MRL is typically set well below any safety limits.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the eating habits of children who have participated in the school fruit and vegetable scheme. [19005]

Caroline Flint: An evaluation of the school fruit and vegetable scheme and its impact on the diet of children participating in the scheme was published in September 2005. The report is based on the evaluation of the scheme in the north east region during the period April to October 2005 and demonstrates that children ate significantly more fruit while participating in the scheme.

Findings showed that:

The combined fruit and vegetable consumption of children eating school dinners was greater than those who had packed lunches.

Children who had packed lunches ate more snacks and desserts than those who had school dinners.

Living in areas of high deprivation was associated with lower fruit and vegetable intake and higher consumption of snacks and desserts.

Girls (but not boys) ate slightly more vegetables after the introduction of the scheme.

The full report is available on the five-a-day website at www.5aday.nhs.uk.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in decreasing the waiting period for patients in need of digital hearing aids. [20056]

Mr. Byrne: The information on waiting times for digital hearing aids is not held centrally. It is down to local providers to plan and commission appropriate services for their local population.

Electroconvulsive Therapy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued to doctors relating to who should *(a)* administer and *(b)* receive electroconvulsive therapy in hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [20612]

Mr. Byrne: In September 1998, the Chief Medical Officer and the President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists wrote to the chief executives of national health service trusts and consultant psychiatrists respectively indicating the need to consider and improve standards of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) administration in relation to ongoing developments in clinical governance.

In May 2003, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance to the NHS in England and Wales on the use of ECT.

In June 2005, the Royal College of Psychiatrists' special committee on ECT published "The ECT Handbook (Second Edition)—The Third Report of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Special Committee on ECT", which gives the latest clinical guidelines for psychiatrists who prescribe electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and practitioners who administer it.

Services continue to monitor the quality and safety of ECT. ECT is a regular part of clinical governance.

Emergency Response Services

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many emergency calls were received by each call centre in each ambulance trust in England in the latest year for which figures are available. [19153]

Mr. Byrne: The number of calls received by each ambulance control room is not collected centrally as some trusts have more than one control room. However, the number of calls received by each ambulance trust is available. This data are published in table three of the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance Services, England: 2004–05", copies of which are available in the Library. This publication is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk.

Family and Childcare Services

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding arrangements for family and childcare services. [23198]

Beverley Hughes: I have been asked to reply.

My Department has invested well over £17 billion on the early years since 1997 as part of an unprecedented expansion of provision of childcare and services for young children and families. This includes funding to local authorities to support free early education for 3 and 4-year-olds.

Funding to support the creation and sustainability of childcare places in England is now made available to local authorities via the General Sure Start Grant. Since 1997 funding specifically for childcare amounts to almost £1.2 billion. The most recent set of figures provided from Ofsted show that the stock of registered childcare places as at 30 September 2005 had reached 1,220,607. This means that the Public Service Agreement for the creation of registered childcare places for the period 2004–08 has already been met.

As at January 2005, 96 per cent. of 3-year-olds were in some form of free early education. There are over 37,000 settings delivering free, Government funded, early education. We have also made available £4.8 million through the Strengthening Families Grant (which includes Marriage and Relationship Support Grant and Family Support Grant) to the voluntary and community sector providing family and relationship support for the financial year 2005–06. We have also made available to the sector £16.4 million from 2004–06 through the Parenting Fund (administered by the National Family and Parenting Institute). We have significantly increased our funding for Home Start UK which supports local schemes to deliver a high quality home visiting support to families, from £874,000 in 2003–04 to £2.46 million in 2004–05 and £2.59 million in 2005–06. We are also undertaking a wide range of additional activity aimed at supporting families but cannot identify expenditure specifically allocated to families.

Between 2004 and 2006 we have allocated £435 million to local authorities for children's centres to deliver childcare, early learning, health and family support services. In addition we are making £210 million available in 2006–07 through the Learning and Skills Council for adults learning for personal and community development. This includes £37 million specifically for family learning including the family literacy, language and numeracy programme.

The Government more widely have also made significant increases to child benefit, and more generous support through the new tax credits. Budget 2004 announced that the Formula Spending Share for children's social services would rise by £500 million between 2005–06 and 2007–08 to a total of £4.5 billion.

Family Planning Clinics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many family planning clinics there were in each year since 1983; and how many women were seen by them in each year. [9991]

Caroline Flint: The information that is currently received by the Department is collated at family planning service provider level rather than by individual family planning clinics. In 2004–05, information was submitted by 175 service providers (primary care trusts and national health service trusts) and 14 Brook Advisory Centres, covering the whole of family planning service provision in England.

The number of different women seen each year by NHS family planning clinics and Brook Advisory Centres is published in table two of the statistical bulletin "NHS Contraceptive Services, England", copies of which are available in the Library and on the Health and Social Care Information Centre's website at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/contraceng2005. The most recent data are in the 2004–05 edition and the 2000–01 edition has data back to 1983.

General Social Care Council

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to make decisions concerning further groups to be registered with the General Social Care Council. [20636]

Mr. Byrne: On 21 July 2005, I announced plans to register the next groups of staff in the social care workforce. These include domiciliary and residential care staff, working with both children and adults. Officials are working with the General Social Care Council on a timetable for implementation of these changes and are developing plans to roll out registration to other groups of social care workers in a manageable way.

Heart By-pass Surgery (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for NHS heart by-pass surgery was in Southend in the last period for which figures are available. [20613]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest available data is for the year ending April 2004. This shows that the average time waited, based on elective finished in-year admissions, for national health service heart by-pass surgery for those residents within Southend-on-Sea Primary Care Trust area is 107 days.

Notes:

1. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. Time waited (days)—time waited statistics from hospital episode statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period, whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Hospital Staffing

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Ministers have issued revised guidance to trusts on the employment of doctors in senior house officer or equivalent posts in paediatric services. [18064]

Mr. Byrne: Ministers have not issued any revised guidance to trusts over the employment of doctors in senior house officer or equivalent posts in paediatric services.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many junior doctors are seeking posts. [18065]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of junior doctors currently seeking posts is not collected centrally.

A snapshot survey of postgraduate deaneries established that as at early August 2005, 136 pre-registration house officers (PRHOs) in England did not have a substantive senior house officer (SHO) or equivalent post to move to upon the expiry of their PRHO contract. This number had reduced to around 100 by early September 2005 and we expect it to have reduced further as more SHO opportunities become available.

Hospital Waiting Times

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department provides on reducing waiting times in NHS hospitals. [20070]

Mr. Byrne: Guidance including practical tools and techniques for reducing and maintaining patient waiting times is available on the NHS Modernisation Agency's website at:

www.wise.nhs.uk

Influenza

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the at-risk population of *(a)* the Kettering primary care trust area, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* England is expected to be inoculated against existing strains of influenza by 31 December. [20281]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Under the new inspection system national targets are no longer set. Targets are now a local decision. In the chief medical officer letter to health professionals dated 25 July, he said that continued improvement of uptake rates across all groups should be encouraged.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* strategic health authorities and *(b)* primary care trusts (PCTs) have influenza pandemic co-ordinators; and how many PCTs have an influenza planning committee. [20851]

Caroline Flint: As stated in the "UK Influenza Contingency Plan", individual strategic health authorities and primary care trusts are responsible for nominating influenza pandemic coordinators and this information is not collated centrally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she intends to purchase a stockpile of gloves and masks for use by *(a)* health professionals and *(b)* the public in the event of an avian influenza pandemic. [20854]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the Health Protection Agency have just completed a review of the evidence on which its infection control advice is based and this was published on 19 October 2005. The guidance covers the level and type of protective measures and equipment required to deal with an influenza pandemic. The stock levels normally available in the national health service and its supply chain are also being reviewed and supplies of essential material will be augmented by further stockpiles if mathematical modelling indicates that this is appropriate.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has issued to general practitioners on steps they should take to prioritise care in the event of an avian influenza pandemic. [20855]

Caroline Flint: The "UK Pandemic Influenza Contingent Plan" provides advice to the national health service and others on the potential impact that a flu pandemic may have on the United Kingdom, and the need for the NHS to develop plans to manage during such an eventuality.

We are in the process of sending information packs to general practitioners regarding preparations for an influenza pandemic. As outlined in the plan, primary care trusts are responsible for developing plans that take into account local needs. We have published "Operational Guidance for Health Service Planners" to help them do this effectively.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ask the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to produce guidance on the optimal use of antivirals during an influenza pandemic. [20860]

Caroline Flint: We are already working with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) regarding the optimal use of antivirals. NICE representatives attended the Department's modelling sub-group of the scientific advisory group, which advises us on various issues including antiviral usage.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to support the development of reverse genetics technology in the production of vaccines against influenza. [20861]

Caroline Flint: This technique is already in operational use at the National Institute of Biological Research.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will agree with influenza vaccine manufacturers an advanced purchase order for a vaccine against the pandemic strain of influenza to be produced as soon as the strain has been identified. [20863]

Caroline Flint: On 19 October 2005, we invited manufacturers to tender for a contract to supply pandemic flu vaccine once the pandemic strain is known. The United Kingdom will need approximately 120 million doses to be available as soon as possible.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the at risk population of *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* the West Midlands are expected to be inoculated against existing strains of influenza by the end of 2005; and if she will make a statement. [19930]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the changed inspection system, new national targets are no longer set. Targets are now a local decision and can be set by primary care trusts. In his letter to health professionals of 25 July, the Chief Medical Officer said that continued improvement of uptake rates across all groups should be encouraged.

International Medical Graduates

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications from international medical graduates applying for training posts in the UK there have been in each year since 1997; and what proportion of such applications were successful. [19926]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of applications from international medical graduates applying for training posts in the United Kingdom since 1997 and the proportion that were successful is not collected centrally.

Junior Doctors

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many junior doctors are currently unable to complete their training due to a lack of senior house officer posts. [18775]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of junior doctors who are currently unable to complete their training because they have been unable to find a senior house officer post is not collected centrally.

A snapshot survey of postgraduate deaneries established that as at early August 2005, 136 pre-registration house officers (PRHOs) in England did not have a substantive SHO or equivalent post to move to upon the expiry of their PRHO contract. This number had reduced to around 100 by early September 2005 and we expect it to have reduced further as more SHO opportunities become available.

Keith Amos (Complaint)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the complaint made by Keith Amos of Marlow (ref. C200503–002) will be referred to a case manager for independent review; and if she will make a statement. [20356]

Jane Kennedy: I understand from the chairman of the Healthcare Commission that this complaint was assigned to a case manager on 21 October 2005. The case manager will contact Mr. Amos to discuss the process for the independent review of his complaint.

Liverpool Hospitals (Funding)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for additional funding for *(a)* Liverpool Royal University Hospital and *(b)* Liverpool Royal Children's Hospital at Alderhey. [20417]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* Revenue allocations are made to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each PCTs target share of available resources, to enable them to commission similar levels of health services for populations in similar need.

It is for PCTs to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the healthcare needs of their local populations.

Lupus

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was made available by her Department for research into effective treatment of Lupus in each of the past five years; and if she will increase future funding levels. [22343]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The information requested is not available.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to, and managed by, national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a significant number concerned with lupus, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were diagnosed with lupus in England in each of the past five years. [22345]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* We do not collect data on the number of people diagnosed with lupus.

Estimates suggest the number of new cases per year at 38 per million population.

Lymphoedema

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure all cancer and non-cancer related lymphoedema patients, receive an early diagnosis and a suitable level of care. [20730]

Mr. Byrne: Patients with lymphoedema are able to access a range of national health service and social care services, tailored to meet their individual needs, to help them manage their condition. It is for health professionals in primary care organisations, in consultation with other stakeholders, to determine which services their populations require and ensure the appropriate level of provision.

The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions, while specifically aimed at people with neurological conditions, is relevant for people with all long-term conditions, including lymphoedema. The NSF addresses a range of key issues including the need for equitable access to a range of services; good quality information and support for patients and carers; the ability to see a specialist and get the right investigations and diagnosis as quickly as possible.

Meningitis

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Greater London, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Romford have been diagnosed with meningitis in each year since 1997. [18009]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the total number of notifications of meningitis, by each cause, and meningococcal septicaemia since 1997 in Greater London, Essex and Havering, which includes Romford, is shown in the table, These notifications are based on clinical diagnosis only, rather than confirmation by laboratory analysis.

Please note that separate data on the number of cases in Romford is not available.

Statutory Notifications—Meningitis

	Disease	*Specificity*	*London*	*Havering*	*Eastern*	*Essex*
1997	Meningitis	meningococcal	84	5	91	15
1997	Meningitis	pneumococcal	31	2	26	4
1997	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	—	—	8	5
1997	Meningitis	viral	25	1	20	3
1997	Meningitis	other specified	23	—	25	5
1997	Meningitis	unspecified	25	2	25	7
1997	Meningococcal septicaemia		132	15	90	11
1998	Meningitis	meningococcal	101	3	104	25
1998	Meningitis	pneumococcal	29	4	28	5
1998	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	2	—	2	2
1998	Meningitis	viral	25	—	28	3
1998	Meningitis	other specified	19	—	16	4
1998	Meningitis	unspecified	38	—	14	5
1998	Meningococcal septicaemia		125	8	100	15
1999	Meningitis	meningococcal	102	—	85	11
1999	Meningitis	pneumococcal	17	1	30	5
1999	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	1	—	1	—
1999	Meningitis	viral	14	2	14	1
1999	Meningitis	other specified	8	—	15	5
1999	Meningitis	unspecified	15	1	13	4
1999	Meningococcal septicaemia		135	11	122	22
2000	Meningitis	meningococcal	95	—	134	21
2000	Meningitis	pneumococcal	11	—	16	—
2000	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	5	—	5	2
2000	Meningitis	viral	36	4	50	6
2000	Meningitis	other specified	10	—	19	3
2000	Meningitis	unspecified	26	2	30	7
2000	Meningococcal septicaemia		138	6	118	25
2001	Meningitis	meningococcal	97	2	75	11
2001	Meningitis	pneumococcal	6	1	20	—
2001	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	2	—	4	—
2001	Meningitis	viral	29	2	117	4
2001	Meningitis	other specified	21	1	10	2
2001	Meningitis	unspecified	46	1	28	5
2001	Meningococcal septicaemia		78	3	97	7

Statutory Notifications—Meningitis

	Disease	*Specificity*	*London*	*Havering*	*Eastern*	*Essex*
2002	Meningitis	meningococcal	49	5	42	1
2002	Meningitis	pneumococcal	13	2	16	1
2002	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	4	—	10	2
2002	Meningitis	viral	8	—	35	—
2002	Meningitis	other specified	6	—	12	3
2002	Meningitis	unspecified	19	—	14	1
2002	Meningococcal septicaemia		44	2	54	4
2003	Meningitis	meningococcal	37	2	53	6
2003	Meningitis	pneumococcal	11	1	15	—
2003	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	—	—	9	2
2003	Meningitis	viral	11	—	23	1
2003	Meningitis	other specified	12	—	9	1
2003	Meningitis	unspecified	17	1	12	4
2003	Meningococcal septicaemia		50	2	40	8
2004	Meningitis	meningococcal	21	2	36	6
2004	Meningitis	pneumococcal	9	1	17	2
2004	Meningitis	haemophilus influenzae	2	—	6	—
2004	Meningitis	viral	9	2	29	—
2004	Meningitis	other specified	11	—	6	—
2004	Meningitis	unspecified	24	1	13	5
2004	Meningococcal septicaemia		23	1	35	4

Note:
1. Romford (Essex) is within the London borough of Havering (London Region).
2. Essex (County) is within Eastern Region but does not include Romford (Essex).

Source:
Health Protection Agency Centre for Infections Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre.

Myasthenia Gravis

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on hospital waiting times for patients diagnosed with myasthenia gravis. [20822]

Mr. Byrne: Waiting time data are not available for specific conditions.

By the end of 2005, the maximum waiting time for first out-patient appointment with a consultant will fall to 13 weeks and the maximum waiting time for in-patient treatment will fall to six months.

NHS Terms of Service

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the NHS terms of service require doctors to prescribe treatments whenever they consider a medicine to be necessary. [18344]

Jane Kennedy: It is a requirement of their contract with primary care trusts that primary medical services contractors in providing essential services to registered patients should offer consultation and where appropriate physical examination for the purpose of identifying the need, if any, for treatment or further investigation. They should also make available such treatment or further investigation as is necessary and appropriate, including the referral of a patient for other services under the National Health Service Act 1977 and liaison with other health care professionals involved in the patient's treatment and care.

Whether or not any treatment includes the prescribing of medicines or drugs is a matter of clinical judgment.

NICE (Drug Approvals)

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new drugs are *(a)* under appraisal and *(b)* awaiting appraisal by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for the treatment of (i) malignant disease and (ii) other diseases. [20355]

Jane Kennedy: I understand from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence that they have 63 appraisals in progress, and 19 of these are for cancer drugs. In addition, there are two cancer drugs awaiting appraisal.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drugs approved by the EU Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use are being assessed by the Department prior to referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [19893]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not assess drugs.

However, the Department is considering referring to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence a number of drugs approved by the European Union committee for medicinal products for human use so that their clinical and cost effectiveness may be determined.

Pensioner Health Services

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the average annual cost of providing NHS health services to someone over state pension age; and if she will make a statement. [19925]

Mr. Byrne: Around 43 per cent. of the national health service hospital and community health services expenditure in 2003–04 was on people over the age of 65. This totalled around £16.5 billion.

A breakdown of the same data by age group shows the following:

£1,400 average expenditure per head for people aged 65–74.

£2,400 average expenditure per head for people aged 75–84.

£4,000 average expenditure per head for people aged 85 and over.

Perinatal Deaths

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many perinatal deaths there were in each of the last 15 years for which figures are available; what are the most common causes of perinatal deaths; and what steps she is taking to reduce the number of perinatal deaths. [20609]

Mr. Byrne: Perinatal deaths include stillbirths and deaths under one week. These data are shown in the table.

Perinatal deaths (stillbirths and deaths within the first week of life) 1990–2004: England and Wales

	Number of stillbirths[1]	*Number of deaths under one week (early neonatal)*
1990	3,256	2,498
1991	3,254	2,396
1992	2,944	2,294
1993	3,866	2,178
1994	3,816	2,142
1995	3,597	2,104
1996	3,539	2,066
1997	3,439	1,941
1998	3,417	1,844
1999	3,305	1,833
2000	3,203	1,753
2001	3,159	1,598
2002	3,372	1,620
2003	3,585	1,749
2004	3,532	1,722

[1] On 1 October 1992 the legal definition of a stillbirth was changed from a baby born dead after 28 or more weeks completed gestation to one born dead after 24 or more weeks completed gestation. This means that perinatal and stillbirth data for 2004 can be compared with data only from 1993 onwards.

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Causes of stillbirths and early neonatal deaths differ significantly. Causes in stillbirths during 2003 are attributed as follows: 48 per cent. were of uncertain cause, 28 per cent. due to asphyxia, anoxia or trauma (antepartum), 14 per cent. were due to congenital anomalies. The remainder were due to antepartum infections, asphyxia, anoxia or trauma (intrapartum) or other specific conditions. Of the early neonatal deaths, 62 per cent. were due to immaturity related conditions, 23 per cent. were due to congenital anomalies, 10 per cent. due to asphyxia, anoxia or trauma (intrapartum) and the remainder due to antepartum infections or other specific causes.

We are committed to reducing, by 2010, the gap in infant mortality between routine and manual groups—as defined in national statistics socio-economic classification—and the population as a whole, by at least 10 per cent.

Comprehensive maternity services are key to providing best outcome. The Government signalled their commitment to maternity services by introducing the maternity standard of the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity services in September 2004 and by bringing forward to 2009 the NSF's target to give all women choice in where and how they have their baby and what pain relief to use, and to have the support of a named midwife. An implementation advisory group of key stakeholders has been established to help take this forward.

The decline in early neonatal deaths is associated with advances in technology and the capability of the neonatal services to improve outcomes for the smallest, sickest babies. We have invested £20 million additional capital and £20 million recurrent revenue funding to further improve access to, and the capability of neonatal services.

The confidential inquiry into maternal and child health, which collects information on deaths from 22 weeks gestation to 28 days of life, will publish annual reports on perinatal mortality. In addition, hospitals will receive individualised reports to enable them to compare their own mortality rates over time.

Rehabilitation Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to increase the number of fully qualified rehabilitation workers for visually impaired people; [20423]

(2) what steps she is taking to increase consistency in rehabilitation services provided for visually impaired people living in different parts of England. [20460]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answers 21 October 2005]:* Rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people are provided by local health and social care bodies. It is for those organisations to commission appropriate services based on local need. This would include the number, training and composition of teams available to provide rehabilitation for blind and partially sighted people.

Risk Sharing Scheme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evaluation she plans to carry out of the results of the risk sharing scheme for beta interferon and glatiramer acetate treatments. [20732]

Mr. Byrne: Ongoing evaluation has been an integral part of the scheme from its inception. The first evaluation is due around summer 2007.

School Nurses

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to recruit school nurses. [19236]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is committed to providing new funding so that by 2010, every primary care trust, working with children's trusts and local

authorities, will be resourced to have at least one full-time, year-round, qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school.

The Department understands that school nurses have an important and central role to play in tackling health issues among children and younger people, such as obesity, exercise, smoking prevention and cessation and sexual and emotional health.

The Chief Nursing Officer is leading the development and promotion of a new modern role for school nurses and many school nurses are already modernising their roles and playing a key role in initiatives such as "Healthy Schools" and preventing teenage pregnancy. The NHS improvement plan and the nursing strategy, "Making a Difference", also point towards an expanded role for school nurses, and a three-year school nurse development programme is currently being updated to ensure school nurses remain a dynamic workforce who are able to contribute to good outcomes for children and young people.

Social Care Services

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to expand the role of the independent and voluntary sectors in providing social care services. [20873]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 October 2005]:* A task force, co-chaired by Jo Williams (chief executive of Mencap) and myself has been set up to strengthen the commercial relationship between the voluntary and community sector and the national health service and social care services. The task force will identify how to break down the barriers that prevent third sector organisations including the voluntary sector and not for profit social businesses having a much greater involvement in delivering person centred health and social care services. The task force will report on their interim conclusions by the end of November 2005.

Specialist Nurses

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received in the past 12 months about the number of specialist epilepsy nurses employed by the NHS. [17723]

Mr. Byrne: The Department have received a small number of inquiries about specialist epilepsy nurses employed in the national health service.

TREASURY

Business Meetings

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of external business meetings of staff in his Department have been carried out *(a)* face-to-face, *(b)* via video conferencing and *(c)* over the telephone in each of the last five years for which records are available. [23649]

John Healey: Since January 2005, HM Treasury has had in place a formal system for recording numbers of external meetings across the Department. No central records are held prior to that date.

For the period 1 January to 1 October 2005 a total of 2,733 meetings were recorded, of which 99 per cent. were face-to-face meetings and 1 per cent. were carried out by telephone. HM Treasury holds no central records for the number of meetings which made use of video conferencing.

Capital Gains Tax

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to prevent avoidance of capital gains tax; and if he will make a statement. [22771]

Dawn Primarolo: This Government are committed to countering tax avoidance (including the avoidance of capital gains tax) and keeps all aspects of the tax legislation under review acting where we find significant abuse of the rules.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23721]

John Healey: The Treasury entered into a framework agreement for partnership arrangements with the Carbon Trust in May 2004. A report was produced following an investigation of the Department's carbon management approach. That investigation followed the Carbon Trust's five step management programme.

Child Benefit (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead have received child benefit in each year since 1997. [24022]

John Healey: Figures below the geographical level of Great Britain are not available for periods prior to August 1999.

Figures for August 1999 to August 2004 are available on the Office for National Statistics Neighbourhood Statistics website: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/datasetList.do?JSAIlowed=&Function=&%24ph=60&CurrentPageId=60&step=1&CurrentTreeIndex=-1&searchString=&datasetFamilyId=215&Next.x=4&Next.y=13

Civil Service Jobs

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of movement of civil service jobs to Norwich; and what criteria will be used to make decisions about relocation. [22092]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government are committed to relocating 20,000 civil servants out of London and the south east by 2010. Budget 2005 reported that over 4,300 posts have already been moved out of London and the

south east. 11 Office of Government Commerce and HM Treasury posts and 12 HMSO posts are currently known to be relocating to Norwich. Individual Departments are responsible for deciding on sites for relocation, but they must do so taking into account both their business needs and local economic factors, as set out in central guidance, "Choosing Locations for Government Business".

As part of this policy the Government have set a presumption against relocating public sector activities to the east of England Government office region. Moves to the east of England that had not been planned before the introduction of this policy in December 2004 require HM Treasury approval.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which Government Departments the reductions of 12,500 civil servant posts announced in the 2005 Budget will take place. [22383]

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 932W, on civil service personnel, if he will break down the figure of 12,500 reduced civil service posts by Department. [23159]

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the progress of Government Departments towards achieving the target reduction in posts set in the 2004 Budget and spending review. [24049]

Mr. Des Browne: In Budget 2005 the Chancellor announced that Departments have delivered the first 12,500 reduction in civil service posts, towards the Government's planned gross reduction of 84,000 civil service posts by 2008. This includes:

	Number
Department for Work and Pensions	Over 8,250
HM Revenue and Customs	1,250
Department for Health	700
Department of Trade and Industry	560
Department for Education and Skills	450
Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs	320
Ministry of Defence	300

Departments will report on further progress in their autumn performance reports.

Climate Change Levy

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the Climate Change Levy (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005 on the revenue raised by the Climate Change Levy. [22986]

John Healey: The Climate Change Levy (Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2005, came into force on the 22 July 2005 and do not affect the total amount of revenue raised by the levy. They are primarily concerned with the simplification of correcting under or over-claimed relief by energy users, and to further support the Government's commitment to combined heat and power generation.

Company Tax Credits

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of each company tax credit in each year from 2004–05 to 2009–10; and if he will make a statement. [22704]

John Healey: The estimated cost of research and development tax credits, vaccines research relief and the remediation of contaminated land are given in the table.

£ million

	Research and development tax credits	*Vaccines research relief*	*Remediation of contaminated land*
2004–05	680	20	20
2005–06	710	20	20
2006–07	770	20	20
2007–08	800	20	30
2008–09	850	20	30
2009–10	900	20	30

Note:
Figures are on a receipts basis and rounded to the nearest 10 million.

Contaminated Land Tax Credit

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies *(a)* are under investigation and *(b)* have been investigated for mis-claiming contaminated land tax credit in each year since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [22698]

John Healey: The information requested is not available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the administration costs of contaminated land tax credit in each year since their introduction; and if he will make a statement. [22699]

John Healey: The information requested is not available.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the timing of corporation tax payments for small and medium companies. [23848]

John Healey: As a matter of course, the Government keep all taxes under review, and any changes to taxation are announced as part of the normal Budget cycle.

Court of Auditors

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to encourage the European Commission *(a)* to improve budget accountability and *(b)* to enable the EU Court of Auditors to approve the annual accounts. [24319]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The United Kingdom presidency has prepared draft conclusions to be agreed at ECOFIN in November, in response to the Commission's Communication "On a Roadmap to an Integrated Internal Control Framework". The conclusions will require the Commission to prepare an action plan to fill gaps in internal control; to assess compliance with regulations; and to assess the effectiveness of present controls. These actions, in addition to those proposed for member states, should improve financial management and control and ultimately achieve the objective of a positive Statement of Assurance from the European Court of Auditors. But this will take time.

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of progress in reforming EU budget procedures towards enabling the accounts to be signed off by the EU Court of Auditors. [24320]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Many improvements have been made during the past few years, including the revision of the Financial Regulation, the introduction of the Integrated Administration and Control System in Agriculture, the annual certification of payments in agriculture by member states, and the annual activity reports by Commission Directorate-Generals, which include declarations of assurance. But there is still much more to do and that is why the United Kingdom presidency has taken forward the response to the Commission's Communication "On a Roadmap to an Integrated Internal Control Framework" by preparing draft conclusions for the November ECOFIN Council, outlining actions which could ultimately achieve the objective of a positive Statement of Assurance from the European Court of Auditors.

Defence Expenditure

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the UK's gross domestic product has been spent on defence in each of the past five years; what he forecasts this percentage to be in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [22186]

Mr. Des Browne: Defence expenditure as a proportion of the UK's gross domestic product over the past five years, with and without the costs of military operations, is as follows:

	Percentage GDP including military operations	*Percentage GDP excluding military operations*
2000–01	2.6	2.5
2001–02	2.4	2.4
2002–03	2.5	2.3
2003–04	2.4	2.3
2004–05	2.4	2.3

The Government's planned defence expenditure over the next three years was set in the 2004 spending review. It represents 1.4 per cent. average annual real terms growth in defence expenditure over the three years to 2007–08 which taken together with the resources allocated in the 2000 and 2002 spending reviews, represents seven consecutive years of planned real-terms growth, the longest such period for over 20 years. Planned defence expenditure as a percentage of forecast GDP is as follows:

	Forecast percentage GDP excluding military operations
2005–06	2.2
2006–07	2.2
2007–08	2.2

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22578]

John Healey: The following, formal consultations, are currently being undertaken by the Chancellor's Departments:

Department/agency	*Consultation subject*	*Consultation commencement*	*Deadline for responses*
HM Treasury	Proposed changes to the eligibility rules for establishing a pension scheme	30 September 2005	23 December 2005
HM Treasury	The Reform of Film Tax Incentives: promoting the sustainable production of culturally British films	29 July 2005	21 October 2005
HM Revenue and Customs	VAT: A review of the scope of the VAT exemption for medical services	1 September 2005	16 December 2005
HM Revenue and Customs	Proposed changes to the eligibility rules for establishing a pension scheme	30 September 2005	23 December 2005
Government Actuary's Department	Proposed assumptions for calculating national insurance rebates for contracted-out pension arrangements for the five years from April 2007	19 September 2005	12 December 2005
Office of National Statistics	Economic consultation on National Accounts Manuals being updated	7 September 2004	31 December 2005

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23466]

John Healey: HM Treasury did not purchase any items of art during 2004–05.

Departmental Travel

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what percentage of business journeys taken by staff in his Department were by *(a)* private and *(b)* public transport in each of the last five years for which records are available; [23388]

(2) how many business journeys taken by staff in his Department were *(a)* by motorised vehicles, *(b)* by aircraft, *(c)* by train or tube, *(d)* by bicycle and *(e)* on foot in each of the last five years for which records are available; [23389]

(3) what percentage of business journeys taken by staff in his Department were made using *(a)* standard and *(b)* first or business class tickets in each of the last five years for which records are available. [23650]

John Healey: HM Treasury do not keep a central record of the type and number of individual journeys made. An answer could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Enterprise Management Incentives

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his estimate is of the total revenue cost of introducing enterprise management incentives in the March 2000 Budget to allow smaller high risk companies to issue the tax-advantaged share options to key staff in each year from 2000–01 to 2009–10; what assessment has been made of the economic effects of this scheme; and if he will make a statement; [22701]

(2) what the total cost of the Enterprise Management Incentive *(a)* has been in each year since 2001–02 and *(b)* is expected to be in each year to 2009–10; what assessment has been made of the effects of this scheme; and if he will make a statement. [22702]

John Healey: National Statistics giving the estimated income tax relief cost of Enterprise Management Incentives (EMI) have been published on HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) website for 2000–01 to 2003–04. A forecast of the income tax and national insurance contributions relief cost of EMI for 2004–05 was first published in the Tax Ready Reckoner at pre-Budget report 2004. No longer-term forecasts have been made. Income tax and national insurance relief is given on the gains employees make when they exercise EMI options. The published figures together with national insurance contribution relief estimates for 2000–01 to 2003–04 are:

	Income tax	*...urance*	*Total*
Estimates			
2000–01	neg	neg	neg
2001–02	neg	neg	neg
2002–03	50	10	60
2003–04	50	10	60
Forecast			
2004–05	60	10	70

An evaluation programme has begun which aims to assess the economic impact and cost-effectiveness of EMI against its stated policy objectives of helping smaller higher risk companies to recruit and retain the people they need to grow and succeed.

Take-up of EMI has been strong, with 5,944 companies having granted options over £1.3 billion in shares to 75,000 employees by 2004–05. Some initial qualitative research among companies using EMI has also been completed, which suggests that it is working well in helping to meet their business needs. This was commissioned from external research contractors as part of the HMRC research programme. The research report is available on the HMRC website.

Enterprise Management Incentives

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost of reducing the minimum holding period for *(a)* investments under the Enterprise Investment Scheme and *(b)* venture capital trusts in each year from 2000–01 to 2009–10; what economic effects have resulted from these changes; and if he will make a statement. [22700]

John Healey: When these changes were introduced the cost was forecast to be £5 million in 2000–01, £15 million in 2001–02, £25 million in 2002–03 and £30 million thereafter. These costs are still our current best estimates, although the corresponding figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 will be slightly higher due to the enhanced tax incentives introduced for VCTs during this period.

Regarding the economic benefits, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 15 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 599W by my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws).

Fuel Oil Tax (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was received in total from the duty on the sale of fuel and diesel in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [22989]

John Healey: Excise duty receipts for Hydrocarbon Oils are included in Table 3 of the HM Revenue and Customs statistical Bulletin for Hydrocarbon Oils, which can be found on HM Revenue and Customs website address at: http://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/index.cfm?task = bullhydro

HM Revenue and Customs does not hold regional oil receipts data centrally.

Gershon Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many full-time equivalent employee reductions have been made as a result of the Gershon review; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23687]

Mr. Des Browne: In Budget 2005 the Chancellor reported that Departments have delivered the first 12,500 reduction in civil service posts and achieved £2 billion of efficiency gains in 2004–05, and Departments will be reporting further progress in their Autumn Performance Reports.

It is expected that by 2007–08, Departments will be achieving annual efficiency gains of £21 billion, but there is no intermediate target for 2005–06. The Transactions Workstream of the Efficiency

Programme, which is improving interactions between citizens and the Government through IT-enabled change programmes, will contribute annual efficiencies of £1 billion by 2007–08. Many other efficiency gains will also be enabled by IT. Departmental plans to achieve the 2004 Spending Review targets are set out in "Efficiency Technical Notes", which are available on departmental and HM Treasury websites.

Government Expenditure (Wales)

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much public money has been spent in Wales by the UK Government in each of the last five years. [23017]

Mr. Des Browne: Chapter 8 of the annual Treasury publication Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses details expenditure on services in the regions and countries of the United Kingdom. Total identifiable spending in Wales for the years 1999–2000 to 2004–05 is contained within table 8.1 of the 2005 edition of PESA.

Industrial Wage

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the average industrial weekly wage in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Northern Ireland. [22852]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 1 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average industrial wage in *(a)* England and Wales *(b)* Northern Ireland is in 2005. (22852)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

Data for 2005 will not be published until 10 November 2005. I will forward the appropriate data to you after this date.

International Finance Facility

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for public finances of counting the International Finance Facility as Government borrowing; and if he will make a statement. [22559]

John Healey: The Treasury will formally approach the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on the classification in National Accounts of UK contributions to an International Finance Facility (IFF) when its final technical details and governance structure have been agreed.

In the case of the pilot IFF for Immunisation (IFFIM), Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, decided on 2 August that:

"The borrowing of IFFIM should be considered as the borrowing of a non-government unit, and not as the borrowing or debt of donor countries"

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department; [23442]

(2) how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002; [23400]

(3) how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23365]

John Healey: Basic literacy and numeracy are the minimum entry-level requirements for the most junior positions within HM Treasury and no staff have requested basic literacy or numeracy training since 2002. Consequently, only higher level training is provided and it has not been appropriate for us to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy skills for Treasury employees or to provide in-house training in basic literacy and numeracy.

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in his Department were relocated in 2004–05 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation, broken down by location; to which locations they have been relocated; how many are expected to be relocated in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23688]

Mr. Des Browne: HMRC are committed to moving 4,250 posts from London and the South East by 2010 and are making good progress towards this total.

The Office of Government Commerce (an independent office of HM Treasury) relocated two posts from London to Norwich in 2004–05. So far in 2005–06 it has relocated four posts to Norwich, with one further move proposed before the end of this year. OGCbuying.solutions (an OGC agency) will also relocate 15 posts from London to Liverpool by April 2006.

Milton Keynes

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23502]

John Healey: The Treasury allocates resources to Departments to fund their policy objectives. The location where the funds are spent is a matter for Departments to decide. Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis shows the outturn of public expenditure by region.

Ministerial Cars

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many ministerial cars have been supplied to his Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency Service in each of the last five years for which records are available. [23651]

John Healey: The Government Car service has supplied six cars to the Treasury, in each of the last five years.

Office for National Statistics

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many consultants employed by the Office for National Statistics were paid £50,000 or above in the last financial year. [23160]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Ms Katy Clark, dated 1 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning, how many consultants employed by the Office for National Statistics earned £50,000 or above in the last financial year. (23160).

In 2004–05, the Office for National Statistics paid 28 companies more than £50,000 for consultancy, contractors and other bought-in expertise. The bulk of these payments was for IT contracting services to support major development programmes such as Neighbourhood Statistics and Statistical and Technological modernisation.

It has not been possible to ascertain from these companies how many consultants or contractors were used and whether any individual earned in excess of £50,000.

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in the Office for National Statistics were affected by the increase in the minimum wage on 1 October. [23161]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Ms Katy Clark, dated 1 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many staff in the Office for National Statistics were affected by the increase in the minimum wage on 1st October. (23161)

I can confirm that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) had 167 staff for whom action needed to be taken in respect of the minimum wage. However, it should be noted that our pay award date is 1 August; pay negotiations are continuing, but had our pay award been implemented on the due date, no staff in ONS would have fallen below the minimum wage.

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent on consultants by the Office for National Statistics in each of the financial years from 1996–97 to 2004–05. [23163]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Ms Katy Clark, dated 1 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how much was spent on consultants by the Office for National Statistics in each financial year from 1996–97 to 2004–05. (23163)

The breakdown of expenditure on consultants, contractors and other bought-in expertise by financial year is shown in the table below.

	£000
1996–97	n/a
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	3,230
1999–2000	4,048
2000–01	4,473
2001–02	4,286
2002–03	6,729
2003–04	11,761
2004–05	27,118

Information relating to the years 1996–97 and 1997–98 is not readily available.

The sharp increase in expenditure from 2002–03 is in respect of the major development programmes of work being undertaken by the Office for National Statistics e.g. Neighbourhood Statistics, Statistical and Technology Modernisation. Most of this expenditure relates to IT systems expertise. Nearly £3 million of the 2004–05 expenditure related to Valued Added Tax, which ceased to be reclaimable during this year.

PFI Schemes

Peter Law: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effects on the *(a)* Welsh economy and *(b)* Blaenau Gwent of the use of private finance initiative schemes. [23551]

John Healey: The Treasury has not completed such an assessment on the geographic areas specified. It is the responsibility of a procuring authority to ensure that its PFI project continues to deliver value for money over its life, and this will include an assessment of whether it is delivering the services and benefits anticipated. To date, PFI schemes in Wales have provided investment in areas such as schools, roads, police facilities, prisons and health.

Research and Development

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of *(a)* vaccines research relief, *(b)* contaminated land tax credit and *(c)* research and development tax credits has been claimed by each type of industry in each year for which information is available, broken down by company size; and if he will make a statement. [22775]

John Healey: The proportion of claims made for the remediation of contaminated land each year by the standard industrial classification reported in the company's annual accounts is given in the following table. The table shows the industry sectors that have generated the most claims, ranked with the sector with the most claims first. Information is not available by size of company.

Proportion of claims for remediation of contaminated land by industry

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	All claims
Real estate, renting and business activities	40%	43%	52%	41%	46%
Construction	6%	16%	18%	26%	17%
Wholesale and retail trade	23%	17%	10%	15%	14%

Proportion of claims for remediation of contaminated land by industry

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	All claims
Manufacturing	12%	11%	10%	8%	10%
Other community, social and personal services	9%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Other	11%	7%	4%	5%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of claims	260	410	730	315	1,715

The information requested is not available for research and development tax credits and vaccines research relief.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies *(a)* are under investigation and *(b)* have been investigated for mis-claiming (i) vaccines research relief and (ii) research and development tax credits in each year since the introduction of each; and if he will make a statement. [22776]

John Healey: The information requested is not available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the administration costs of *(a)* vaccines research relief and *(b)* research and development tax credits in each year since the introduction of each; and if he will make a statement. [22777]

John Healey: The information requested is not available.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit awards ceased on 31 August; how many new awards started on 1 September; for what reason tax credit awards must be re-applied for when a child leaves school at 16 years and moves into further education; and what assessment he has made of the administrative cost of the process of re-application for these claimants. [18866]

Dawn Primarolo: There is no need to re-claim tax credits when a 16-year-old continues into further, full-time, non-advanced education provided HM Revenue and Customs is notified before 1 September. If a claimant fails to notify, their award is adjusted from 1 September.

However, providing HMRC is subsequently notified that the 16-year-old will be continuing in full-time education, the award will be readjusted and the restored award backdated for a maximum of three months.

Margaret Moran: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises were eligible for research and development tax credits in the last five years; and what the take-up was in *(a)* Luton and *(b)* the UK. [24010]

John Healey: The National Statistics estimate is that there were 4.3 million small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK in 2004 (defined as those with up to 250 employees). Research and Development (R&D) tax credits are only available to companies conducting eligible R&D. Of the 4.3 million SMEs, around one million were companies and thus potentially eligible for the tax credits. However, the vast majority of SMEs do not carry out R&D. Of those that do, some will not meet the special SME definition which applies for R&D tax credits, and others may not spend more than the £10,000 per annum required on qualifying R&D.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment for the SME R&D tax credit (published in March 2000) estimated that 4,500 companies would be eligible for the tax credit.

Information on the number of claims received for the SME R&D tax credit since it was introduced are published as National Statistics on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/corporate_tax/randdtcmenu.htm.

The information requested for Luton is not available.

Taxation (Wales)

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been raised through taxation from the residents of Wales in each of the last five years. [23016]

Mr. Des Browne: The information on income tax is provided in the following table.

	£ billion Amount of tax paid by residents in Wales
2001-02[1]	3.4
2002-03[2]	3.6
2003-04[3]	3.9
2004-05[3]	4.1
2005-06[3]	4.4

[1] Based on the 2001–02 Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI)
[2] Based on the 2002–03 SPI
[3] Based on the 2002–03 SPI and projected forwards in line with Budget 2005 assumptions.

Undeclared Work

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the value of undeclared work in the United Kingdom. [22839]

John Healey: There is no estimate of the value of undeclared work in the United Kingdom.

Unemployment (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes in the level of unemployment there have been in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 2003. [23022]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Michael Penning, dated 1 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (23022).

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers of unemployed people who were resident in the Hemel Hempstead Parliamentary Constituency. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 2003 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Table 2, attached, shows the numbers and changes on year for claimants resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency for each September from 2002 to 2005.

The data are published on the Office for National Statistics's Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk

Table 1: Number of unemployed, resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency

12 months ending	*Thousand Level*
February 2003	2
February 2004	2
March 2005	2

* Disclosive sample size (less than three).

Notes:
1. The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability.
2. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey.

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Hemel Hempstead constituency

September	*Level*	*Change on year*
2002	1,035	—
2003	1,116	81
2004	1,090	-26
2005	1,212	122

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what evidence he relied in deciding on the thresholds for carbon emissions on which vehicle excise duty is graduated. [23666]

John Healey: The Chancellor considers all relevant economic, social and environmental factors when setting taxation policy.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult and Family Learning

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funds she plans to make available for adult and family learning in schools as proposed in her recent White Paper. [23948]

Beverley Hughes: Between 2006 and 2008 my Department is making available £680 million through local authorities and schools to support schools to develop a core set of extended services which will include adult and family learning. In addition we are making £210 million available in 2006–07 through the Learning and Skills Council for adults' learning for personal and community development. This includes £37 million specifically for family learning including the family literacy, language and numeracy programme. Many such courses and programmes will take place in schools.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of funding for adult education in Essex was in each of the last five years; and what it is estimated to be for the current year. [18791]

Phil Hope: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including adult education, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body.

In 2001–02 the Learning and Skills Council spent £2,236 million on adult programmes including FE, Work Based Learning, Adult and Community Learning and other programmes. This increased to £2,427 million in 2002–03 and to £2,866 million in 2003–04. These figures are available in the LSC's published accounts. Figures for adult education for the years prior to 2001 are not comparable as the budget was split between a range of different organisations.

My Department does not hold funding figures for adult education in Essex. As the allocation of funding in local areas relates to the LSC's operational responsibilities, I have asked the LSC's Chief Executive, Mary Haysom, to write to the hon. Member with the information requested. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Bob Spink, dated 25 October 2005:

Further to Mr Phil Hope's written reply to your Parliamentary Question (no. 18791) about funding for adult education in Essex, I am pleased to supply the specific information for Essex.

The figures are for the Essex County Council administrative area only and are for learning programmes delivered by Essex County Council's Adult Community Learning service (they exclude figures for the unitary authority areas of Southend on Sea and Thurrock, which also fall within the responsibility of LSC Essex). The figures relate to the LSC's funding streams:

Adult and Community Learning

Further Education

Additional Learning Support

Learners Support Fund.

The figures are:

	£
2002/03	9,850,481
2003/04	11,074,670
2004/05	11,973,567
2005/06	[1]11,121,726

[1] Estimated.

I trust that this is the information that you require and that you will find it helpful.

CAFCASS

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what is the allocated training budget per employee of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in 2005–06; and how much was spent on training per employee in each of the two preceding financial years. [22497]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* This is a matter for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the vacancy rate in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. [18745]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Child Care

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places were available in each of the past 30 years. [20318]

Beverley Hughes: We are unable to provide figures for the period requested other than at disproportionate cost. Details of the number of child care places available in England for each year between 1990 and 2005 are given as follows.

(a) Figures from day care facilities surveys, 1990–2001

	Total number of child care places	*Childminders*	*Full day care*	*Out of school/holiday clubs*	*Sessional care*
1989–90	303,100	205,600	97,500	No figures	416,400
1990–91	339,400	233,300	106,100	No figures	428,400
1991–92	390,900	254,300	116,800	19,800	414,500
1992–93	469,533	300,700	133,800	35,033	396,900
1993–94	549,300	357,500	147,600	44,200	411,300
1994–95	614,000	373,600	161,500	78,900	410,600
1995–96	646,467	376,200	178,300	91,967	397,700
1996–97	654,900	365,200	193,800	95,900	383,700
1997–98	709,967	370,700	223,000	116,267	383,600
1998–99	767,233	336,600	247,700	182,933	347,200
1999–2000	794,967	320,400	264,200	210,367	353,100
2000–01	838,800	304,600	285,100	249,100	330,200

(b) Using data from

i. 1997–2003: "Ofsted registered" equivalent statistics generated by Sure Start Unit from local authority returns

ii. 2003—present: Ofsted registrations

	Total child care places	*Childminders*	*Full daycare*	*Out of school/holiday clubs*	*Sessional care*
1996–97	637730	309,973	283,975	43,782	—
1997–98	643,736	309,918	283,823	48,995	—
1998–99	688,412	309,423	299,078	79,911	—
1999–2000	746,719	304,926	316,021	125,772	—
2000–01	821,537	300,263	337,004	184,270	—
2001–02	892,726	307,485	358,371	226,870	—
2002–03	967,821	300,883	381,550	285,388	280,779
2003–04	1,102,686	319,689	456,298	326,699	274,135
2004–05	1,175,275	316,089	517,975	341,211	249,647

The apparent discrepancies between the two data sets during the period 1996–97 to 2000–01 reflect different data collection methodologies. For instance, the Daycare Facilities Survey (DCFS) treats Out of School/ Holiday Club places in a different manner to the Ofsted/ LA figures. The DCFS counted a Holiday Club place that is available during each school holiday as three places (one at Easter, one in the summer, and one at Christmas) whereas the Ofsted/LA figures would consider it as just one place. The DCFS childminder places count methodology itself underwent major revision between 1991–92 and 1992–93, which explains the sudden leap in the figures there.

Since 2003 the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Families Group has used quarterly registration data from Ofsted to measure the stock of, and fluctuations in, childcare place. Prior to that figures were generated from comparable data included within local authorities' annual returns to the Early Years and Childcare Unit (now part of the Sure Start, Extended Schools and Families Group). These administrative data figures have less statistical validity than the Daycare Facilities Survey, which were published as National Statistics.

Departmental Property

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what property her Department owns in the Kettering constituency. [24131]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not own any property in Kettering.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to her Department; [21012]

(2) what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of her Department. [21112]

Maria Eagle: My Department has a Skills For Life (basic skills) framework which sets out how we support staff with basic skills needs.

The Department provides advice and guidance to any member of staff who wants to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills, and can arrange for screening and diagnostic assessment.

Earlier this year the Department ran an in-house basic skills course for staff. The programme gave people with an identified skills need three hours tuition per week, delivered by tutors from the local adult education service. The tutor is still on-site for three hours per week to provide additional learning support to participants to help them enhance their skills.

In 2002, the last time the Department undertook a large recruitment of administrative staff, candidates were assessed via a selection process, which included written tests for numeracy and literacy.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list formal consultations being sponsored by her Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22566]

Maria Eagle: My Department is sponsoring 13 formal consultations. These are in the following list with corresponding commencement dates and deadlines for responses.

My Department has no agencies.

Department for Education and Skills

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Consultation on Proposals to Extend the Streamlined Route for Schools to Acquire Foundation Status to Primary Schools'	5 July 2005	8 November 2005
Youth Matters	18 July 2005	4 November 2005
Somewhere To Go, Something To Do	18 July 2005	4 November 2005
A Single Inspectorate for Children and Learners	29 July 2005	4 November 2005
New Fire Safety Guidance for Schools	1 August 2005	18 November 2005
Cross Government Guidance—Sharing Information on Children and Young People	23 August 2005	15 November 2005
European Qualifications Framework	31 August 2005	23 November 2005
Review of the Regulations Governing the Registration of Pupils in Schools	1 September 2005	14 December 2005
Improving the HE Applications Process	9 September 2005	5 December 2005
Turning the Tables—Transforming School Food—Recommendations for the Development and Implementation of Revised School Lunch Standards	3 October 2005	3 December 2005
Consultation on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) (Further and Higher Education) Regulations 2006	5 October 2005	30 December 2005
Consistent Financial Reporting Framework 2006/7	13 October 2005	5 January 2006
Draft Standards for Support and Outreach Services	24 October 2005	27 January 2006

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Oxfordshire were in receipt of education maintenance allowance *(a)* in total and *(b)* at the rate of (i) £30, (ii) £20 and (iii) £10 per week in the last year for which figures are available. [18040]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate Education Maintenance Allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Andrew Smith, dated 25 October 2005:

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "how many students in Oxfordshire were in receipt of education maintenance allowance *(a)* in total, *(b)* as the rate of (i) @ 30, (ii) @ 20 and (iii) @ 10 per week in the last year for which figures are available."

During Academic Year 2004/05 the number of young people who had received one or more EMA payments in Oxfordshire Local Authority area was 1,410.

EMA is awarded in three defined payment bands of £30, £20 and £10, depending on household income. In Oxfordshire Local Authority area the take-up of EMA by payment band is split as follows: 72% on £30 per week, 13% on £20 per week and 15% on £10 per week.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher.bradley@lsc.gov.uk

Havering Borough

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the cost of collecting tuition fees from students in the London borough of Havering in the last year for which figures are available. [22957]

Bill Rammell: Where students are liable for higher education tuition fees, they pay them direct to the institution. Information on the cost to universities is not collected.

Education (Kingston and Surbiton)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Kingston and Surbiton constituency attended nursery in each of the last 10 years

for which figures are available; and how many children in Kingston and Surbiton have taken up free nursery places since the policy was introduced. [22469]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-year-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

The available information on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency area and Kingston upon Thames local authority is shown in the tables.

For 2005, information for private and voluntary providers is available for Kingston upon Thames but not currently available for Kingston and Surbiton constituency.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds Parliamentary constituency: Kingston and Surbiton

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
2004	550	280	800	820	170	1,000
2005	560	n/a	900	790	n/a	1,000

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Notes:

1. Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

2. Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds Local authority: Kingston upon Thames

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	890	n/a	890	n/a	n/a	[4]1,600
1998	890	n/a	890	n/a	n/a	[4]1,600
1999	890	n/a	890	n/a	n/a	[4]1,700
2000	940	[5]0	900	n/a	n/a	[4]1,400
2001	910	[5]170	1,100	n/a	n/a	[4]1,700
2002	950	[5]200	1,100	1,400	[4]270	1,600
2003	890	[5]400	1,300	1,400	[6]240	1,700
2004	890	[7]390	1,300	1,400	[6]260	1,600
2005	910	[7]520	1,400	1,300	[6]230	1,600

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local authority area and other factors. However, my Department do not publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Home Education

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding is available to parents who wish to educate at home children with learning disabilities who are over 16 years of age. [23604]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* As with children of compulsory school age my Department does not provide extra funding for parents of young people aged 16 and over who choose to educate their children at home. Resources for post-16 education and training are allocated by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to local authorities, further education colleges and other providers to enable all young people a place in education or training. The LSC also supports a network of specialist colleges for learners with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities and supports some young people who learn at home because their medical condition does not allow them to attend school or college. Parents of young people can receive advice from the Connexions Service about the types of provision that may be suitable for their children.

Learning and Skills Councils

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will assess the effect of the proposed redundancies on each office of the Learning and Skills Council in *(a)* Hampshire and *(b)* the Isle of Wight. [16503]

Bill Rammell: The LSC is embarking upon a major transformation programme that will make it a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-focused organisation. This will build upon its existing strengths; further develop its relationships with providers and with its partners, and help push the highest proportion of its funding out through colleges and providers into front line delivery. At local level, the LSC will develop small teams of professional staff who will support the delivery of its priority objectives through strategic relationships with colleges, providers and other key stakeholders and so ensure that the needs of local employers and learners are met. I fully support the changes the LSC is making as I believe it will help bring about an organisation that is fit for purpose.

The effects on organisation and staffing are matters for the LSC. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the LSC's Chief Executive, to write to the hon. Gentleman with further information. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Hancock, dated 19 October 2005:

You asked a recent question in the house about the impact of changes at the LSC on the offices in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We only have one office, which is based in Fareham.

The purpose of our programme of change at the LSC is to ensure we develop a structure which is fit for purpose as we take forward our agenda for change with colleges and other post 16 providers of education and training. Central to the arrangements will be strong professional local teams developing strategic relationships with all the key players in each locality, supported by a Regional Service Centre and a slimline National Office. We are committed to maintaining a presence in each of our local LSC areas.

We are currently in the early stages of working through how best to implement this policy in each part of the country, so I am afraid that at this stage I cannot set out specifically how the arrangements for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight will be taken forward. But I can assure you that at the heart of our deliberations will be how best the LSC can help meet the needs of learners, employers, communities and the economy across the area.

I am copying this letter to Hilary Chadwick, our Executive Director for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and am asking her to keep you informed as our thinking develops.

Lifelong Learning

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department takes to promote lifelong learning among teachers. [23367]

Phil Hope: Our recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" set out our plans for a "new professionalism" for teachers, in which career progression and financial rewards will go to those who make the biggest impact on pupil progress and who show commitment to their own professional development and that of their colleagues. A thorough reform of all teachers' professional standards, with more stretch at every level, will set out what can be expected of teachers at each stage in their career. Existing teacher appraisals will be replaced by teaching and learning reviews, which will help focus teachers on effective classroom practice and ensure that they are involved in effective professional development and, where this is appropriate, contributing to the professional development of others.

Smoking

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of sixth form colleges have a designated smoking area for students. [20795]

Bill Rammell: Sixth Form Colleges are part of the further education sector and are independent institutions responsible for their own health and safety policies. The Department does not hold information about colleges' smoking policies or their provision of designated smoking areas for students.

Special Educational Needs

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the training requirements of the education workforce to equip them with the skills needed to improve attainment among pupils with special educational needs; and what estimate she has made of the costs of such a programme. [23945]

Maria Eagle: The National Standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and the Induction Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers, both cover special educational needs (SEN).

In order to be awarded QTS, trainee teachers must demonstrate that they understand their responsibilities under the statutory SEN Code of Practice, know how to seek advice from specialists on less common types of SEN, can differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEN, and can identify and support pupils who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Induction standards require newly qualified teachers to demonstrate that they can plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils in their classes with SEN, with or without a statement and, in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, can contribute to the preparation and implementation of individual education plans or the equivalent.

Once qualified, all teachers are expected to identify their development needs through performance management arrangements, and to address identified needs by undertaking appropriate professional development. This includes strengthening SEN knowledge.

All schools receive a school development grant which they are able to use to support improvements in any aspect of teaching and learning. Local authorities may retain a proportion of this grant, under certain conditions, to provide specific training and development of SEN.

The Department's published SEN Strategy, "Removing Barriers to Achievement" recognised the importance of training and committed us to work closely with the Training and Development Agency for Schools to ensure that initial teacher training and programmes of continuing professional development provide a good grounding in core skills and knowledge of SEN. We have commissioned the TDA to carry forward a range of initiatives designed to improve and strengthen the SEN skills and confidence of trainees, newly qualified and established teachers. These initiatives will be implemented over the period 2005–08 at a cost of approximately £1.1 million.

Support staff, including teaching assistants, also play an important role in schools, often working closely with pupils with SEN and disabilities. In recognition of this, the TDA also now has responsibility for support staff training and development. The National Occupational Standards for Teaching/Classroom Assistants contains elements relevant to working with pupils with SEN or particular educational needs. The TDA will be reviewing these standards as part of its new responsibilities. Induction training materials on SEN for teaching assistants working in both primary and secondary schools are available, as is introductory training for other support staff, which contains a discrete module covering inclusion, SEN and disabilities. The standards for higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs), for which the IDA is also responsible, require HLTAs to know the legal definition of SEN and be familiar with guidance about meeting SEN given in the SEN code of practice. HLTAs also promote and support the inclusion of all pupils in learning activities.

Star Awards

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) pursuant to the letter concerning Star Awards from the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education dated July 2005, and the correction letter of 2 August 2005, who the contractor who caused the distribution error was; what steps have been taken to ensure that the error is not paid for from public funds; and if she will make a statement; [23220]

(2) pursuant to the letter dated July 2005, concerning Star Awards from the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, what the estimated cost of the error was; and how much was accounted for by *(a)* stationery, *(b)* postage, *(c)* staffing costs and *(d)* other costs. [23221]

Bill Rammell: The contractor that caused the distribution error was Prolog.

The estimated total cost of rectifying the error was £500, most of which related to DfES staff time. Prolog has compensated my Department with this amount As a result of this incident, I instructed my officials that in future contractors should not be used to despatch letters signed by Ministers, unless agreed in advance. In these cases, additional checks will be carried out prior to despatch.

University Admissions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact post-qualification university applications will have on the Government's 50 per cent. target for university entry. [23218]

Bill Rammell: The consultation on higher education applications is primarily about increasing fairness in the system. It argues that an improved application system may encourage some students to apply who otherwise would not have considered higher education as a destination, but it does not attempt to quantify any increase in applicant numbers. Instead, we have put forward a number of important proposals for reform that are driven by a shared desire to make the higher education application system fairer for all students. They do this by giving applicants better information about their higher education options so that they make better targeted applications; by not basing admissions decisions on predicted examination grades, more than half of which are wrong; and through an extended system to allow students whose results are better than expected to apply to other institutions or courses with the safety net of their conditionally offered places to fall back on if necessary. The consultation explains that it is possible to introduce such reforms by 2008–09 and that they might pave the way for a further reformed system of post-qualification applications in the longer term.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the recent proposals from the Secondary Heads Association regarding post-qualification university applications; and if she will make a statement. [23219]

Bill Rammell: A commission of the Secondary Heads Association (SHA) published a report in November 2004 that found the reasons for a system of post-qualification applications to higher education "overwhelming". That report was a timely one, coming just as Sir Alan Wilson was beginning his work to consider how a post-qualification application system might be implemented. Three members of the SHA group that had prepared that report sat on Sir Alan's national Consultation Group that was prominent in helping to develop the present proposals for reform. Sir Alan's report, which forms the current consultation document, acknowledges fully the SHA work and adopts some of its rationale for post-qualification applications and in particular the practical concept of the two-stage approach which is described in detail in the consultation document.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alcohol/Drug Use

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what recent action his Department has taken to educate children in schools in the Province about alcohol; [22642]

(2) what recent action his Department has taken to discourage drug use in schools in Northern Ireland. [22663]

Angela E. Smith: Schools are required to have a drugs education policy that must outline how the curricular requirement to educate all pupils about the dangers of drugs and alcohol misuse is met. The Department issued updated guidance to all schools in May 2004 to support them in drawing up their policy.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been certified as having died due to *(a)* alcoholic liver disease, *(b)* alcoholic cardiomyopathy and *(c)* mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol in each of the last five years. [22810]

Angela E. Smith: The table gives the number of deaths where the underlying cause of death was alcoholic liver disease[1], alcoholic cardiomyopathy[2] or mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol[3] in the latest year available, 2004.

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code K70.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code I42.6.

[3] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code F10.

Number of deaths registered with underlying cause of death: alcoholic liver disease, alcoholic cardiomyopathy, or mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol, 2004

Cause of death	*Number of deaths (2004)*[1]
Alcoholic liver disease	126
Alcoholic cardiomyopathy	3
Mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol	68

[1] Provisional data

Amateur Sports Clubs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered community amateur sports clubs in Northern Ireland are receiving relief from business rates. [22886]

Angela E. Smith: There is no requirement for sports clubs in Northern Ireland to register with Inland Revenue as Community Amateur Sports Clubs to receive sport and recreational relief and therefore this figure is not available.

Currently 682 sports clubs in Northern Ireland receive sport and recreational relief.

Avian Influenza

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional measures are being taken to prevent the illegal import of *(a)* exotic and *(b)* domesticated birds into Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [23568]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Portal Inspectors already maintain a presence at Northern Ireland ports and airports. Among their responsibilities they conduct various checks on travellers and commercial consignments to prevent illegal importation of animals (including birds) and animal products. There is no distinction made between illegal imports of exotic and domestic birds into Northern Ireland.

All individuals/companies importing legal consignments of animals/birds entering Northern Ireland are required to present their documentation including health certificate (if applicable) to DARD officials for scrutiny. Inspectors have the power to off-load consignments, to detain or seize suspect illegal imports.

If there is an outbreak of disease in an exporting country DARD takes appropriate emergency safeguard action in accordance with Community legislation. This may include a ban on imports of animals and animal products from all, or parts, of that country.

As the threat of avian influenza has increased, Portal inspectors have been more vigilant in respect of imports from countries posing a higher disease risk. They have, in conjunction with HM Revenue and Customs, conducted specific operations against flights from high risk countries in relation to avian influenza and also issued advice leaflets to travellers.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines he intends to issue to those people who keep poultry, other than farmers, to ensure proper information is available and appropriate action taken with urgency should symptoms of avian influenza appear in their flocks. [22822]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has published general guidance on risks associated with avian influenza (AI) and appropriate biosecurity measures to be followed to protect the health of non-commercial poultry flocks. This is available on the DARD website and is also being made available through sellers of feed and other sources.

The Department has also written to stakeholder representative bodies and meetings have been held with them to communicate information to a wider cross-section of interested parties, other than farmers.

The Department has also increased the capacity of its helpline to handle queries on AI and has posted a raft of information on its website.

The Department is implementing recent European Commission decisions regarding AI. One such preventative measure will require poultry keepers to register with the Department. This will enable the Department to communicate directly with a larger number of poultry keepers than are required currently to notify the Department of the poultry they keep.

Birds

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered dealers and importers of birds there are in Northern Ireland; and how many birds each has imported over the past 12 months. [23592]

Angela E. Smith: Any premises where animals, including exotic birds, are kept primarily for the purposes of selling to the public are required to be licensed as pet shops. There are 90 licensed pet shops.

There is no requirement to register or licence an individual who acts as a wholesaler of birds unless he sells direct to the public. There is no register of importers of exotic birds.

We do not have any record of importations from GB as there is no requirement for these to be specifically licensed. However, there have been two imports of birds from Belgium to a pet shop here which involved 890 birds. There have also been five importations of birds as family pets direct to private premises. Importations direct to a zoo are licensed and 28 birds have been imported from GB to Belfast Zoo over the past 12 months.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines will be issued to the general public on the disposal of dead birds found in public places in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [22821]

Angela E. Smith: On the 19 October 2005 the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development issued a press notice advising the public that they could report any unusual bird deaths, particularly those of wildfowl, to the Department's helpline. Arrangements are in place to receive reports of such incidents over the weekend period.

The Department will assess the significance of the reports being received. Should the Department assess the situation as posing any sort of potential link to avian influenza (AI) it will make arrangements to remove the birds for laboratory analysis.

A question and answer brief regarding the Department's measures directed at surveillance for AI in the Northern Ireland wild bird population is available on the Department's website. This includes general information on sensible precautions to be observed when handling dead birds.

Information regarding the disposal of dead birds is dependent on the nature of the incident being reported to the Department. In most circumstances the disposal will be no different to the action normally taken by a householder or member of the public.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what checks are in place in Northern Ireland to prevent illegal *(a)* smuggling and *(b)* selling of exotic birds; and what punishments are available for those found guilty of carrying out these acts. [23593]

Angela E. Smith: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development portal inspectors maintain a presence at Northern Ireland ports and airports. Checks are undertaken for illegal smuggling of live animals, including exotic birds and animal products, particularly originating from Third Countries. There have been no illegal exotic birds found in 2005.

The illegal import of an exotic bird is an offence under article 16 the Animals and Animal Products (Import and Export) Regulations (NI) 2005. It attracts *(a)* on summary conviction, a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum level 5 (£5,000) or to imprisonment not exceeding three months or to both; or *(b)* on conviction on indictment, to a fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to both. The offence of selling such a bird would be pursued as the illegal importation of the bird as there is no specific offence of selling an illegally imported bird.

Bovine TB

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in Northern Ireland. [22652]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, has in place a bovine tuberculosis (TB) control programme, which aims to bring about a substantial reduction in TB disease levels in Northern Ireland. The incidence of TB has been decreasing in Northern Ireland since early to mid-2003. This trend has continued during the first eight months of 2005.

The control measures are based on a programme of testing, the slaughter of infected animals, the restriction of movements of animals to and from infected herds and surrounding herds, and the tracing of contact animals.

Following the TB Policy Review undertaken in 2002, DARD has introduced a number of new measures to strengthen the control of TB in Northern Ireland. The most important of these measures are tighter restrictions on overdue tests and changes to the valuation system, including the establishment of an independent appeal panel to resolve valuation disputes.

Work is also under way on the feasibility of further measures that can be introduced to control TB. This includes a pilot on the use of the gamma interferon blood test, in combination with skin testing, to assist in the detection of TB in cattle in certain circumstances, and a review of the existing arrangements for TB testing arrangements.

In relation to badgers and TB, a Badger Stakeholder Group was established in May 2004 to review all the relevant information available on badgers and to consider the potential need for a badger management

strategy to help reduce TB levels in Northern Ireland. At present, work is under way to develop cost/benefit information to assist the group. No decision will be taken on badgers in Northern Ireland until the work of the Badger Stakeholder Group has been completed.

Breast Cancer

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the level of uptake of the breast cancer screening programme was in *(a)* each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency and *(b)* each health board area in each of the past three years; and what steps are being taken to promote uptake of screening. [23379]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available on a parliamentary constituency basis but in respect of health board areas the uptake rate[1] of breast screening is as set out in the following table.

[1] The uptake rate is calculated on the basis of the number of women screened as a percentage of the number invited over a three year period.

	Year ending: March		
	2004	*2003*	*2002*
EHSSB	68.5	67.4	70.5
NHSSB	82.8	81.2	76.9
SHSSB	76.4	74.9	78.1
WHSSB	78.8	74.7	74.9

Each of the four health boards is actively involved in a variety of ways in seeking to improve uptake of breast screening. Particular attention is being paid to those in disadvantaged areas, ethnic minority groups, women with learning/literary difficulties. Tailored training and education updates have been introduced for GPs, nurses based in general practice, and Action Cancer and Ulster Cancer Foundation personnel; information sessions have been held for women, carers, and staff in day/adult centres.

Buckley Report

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the legal costs incurred in acquiring an injunction preventing the publication of information from Sir Michael Buckley's report in a local newspaper. [23438]

Angela E. Smith: No legal costs were incurred in acquiring the injunction.

Cancer Patients (Parking Charges)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will exempt cancer patients from parking charges in NHS hospitals in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [23380]

Mr. Woodward: Decisions about charging for car parking at hospitals, and exemptions from them, are matters for individual health and social services trusts. Not all acute hospital trusts charge for car parking. For those that do, the hospital travel costs scheme provides for patients who are in receipt of certain state benefits, or who are on a low income, to be reimbursed for hospital travel costs, including car parking charges.

On 13 October, the Parliamentary Health Committee announced an inquiry into co-payments and charges in the NHS, including charges for amenities such as car parking. I will wish to consider the findings of the inquiry when it is complete.

Cattle Exports

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list organisations in Northern Ireland which have been consulted on the proposed change in legislation relating to cattle exports. [23319]

Angela E. Smith: The organisations in the following list were consulted on amendments to Northern Ireland export controls which would be needed to allow the export of cattle born on or after 1 August 1996 and beef or bovine products derived from them.

26 district councils
81 hauliers
Aberdeen Angus Society
ABP Lurgan
ABP Newry
Animal Welfare Federation NI
Association of Local Authorities in Northern Ireland
Ballymena Meats
Belfast Zoo
Blackface Sheep Breeders Association
Blue Ribbon Dog Foods
Border Leicester Sheep Breeders Club
British Holstein Society
C & J Meats
Cattle Traders' and Stockowners' Association
CMO, DHSSPS
Compassion in World Farming
Concordia Countryside Services Ltd.
Crossgar Meats
Doherty and Gray Wholesale Meats
Down Royal Corporation of Horse Breeders
Dungannon Meats
Dungannon Proteins
Elite Butchers Association
Elmgrove Foods
Etherson Meats
Eurofreeze Ireland
Eurostock Foods
Favour Petfoods
FC Robinson
Feedall Pet Foods
Feedwell Animal Foods
Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland
Foyle Meats
Foyle Proteins
General Consumer Council
Gold Medal Dog Foods
Greenleaf Fibre
Half Breed Horse Breeders Society
Hampshire Down Sheep Breeders Association
Hewitt Brothers
Hilton Meat Products
Ile de France Breeders Club

Irish Beltex Sheep Breeders Club
Irish Draught Horse Society (NI)
Irish Moiled Cattle Society
Irish Pony Society (NI Region)
Irish Thoroughbred Breeders Association (Northern Region)
Kettyle Foods
Lean and Easy Ltd.
Linden Foods
Livestock and Meat Commission
Lleyn Sheep Breeders Club
Mackle/Brandy Petfood
Martin Lavery Tripe and Dog Food Supplies
Master Hounds Association
McKee's Meats
MKL Meats
Moyallen Quality Foods
National Beef Association
National Pony Society (NI Area)
NI Belgian Blue Club
NI Blonde D'Aquitaine Cattle Club
NI Charlois Club
NI Council for Equestrianism
NI Hereford Breeders Association
NI Holstein Friesian Breeders Club
NI Poultry Federation
NI Rep for Irish Horseracing Authority
NI Sheep Breeders Development Group
NI Shetland Pony Society
NI Simmental Cattle Club
NI Suffolk Sheep Club
Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association
Northern Ireland Auctioneers Association
Northern Ireland Dairy Association
Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association
Northern Ireland Horse Breeders
Northern Ireland Master Butchers' Association
Northern Ireland Meat Exporters' Association
Nutts About Dogs
O'Kane Poultry
O'Neills Dog Food
Oakdale Meats
Omagh Meats
P. Traynor Quality Meats
Paddy Dog Food
Pedro Pet Foods
Pharmaceutical Society for Northern Ireland
Piedmontese Society
Principal Environmental Health Officers
Rare Breed Society
Rare Breed Survival Trust
S & M Meats
Salers Cattle Society
Shropshire Representative for NI
Silverbirth Dog Foods
Stevenson and Co.
Tenderlean Meats
Topping Meats
Townsend Meats
Trio Bloom
Ulster Ayrshire Cattle Club
Ulster Farm By-Products
Ulster Farmers Union
Ulster Jersey Cattle Club
Ulster Poultry Federation
Ulster Ram Breeders Association
Ulster Shorthorn Breeders Association
Unipet
United Kingdom Renderers' Association
USPCA
Vanstar Meats
VetNI
WD Meats
Wm Sprott Ltd.
Wonder Dog Foods
Woodland Meats.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the value of exports of live cattle from Northern Ireland was in 1995. [23383]

Angela E. Smith: In 1995, the value of live cattle exports from Northern Ireland was estimated to be £34.6 million. This figure relates only to movements out of the UK.

Child Abuse

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines are issued by education boards to assist teachers on how to prevent and report child abuse; and if he will make a statement. [22820]

Angela E. Smith: The Department's publication—1999/10 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' contains comprehensive and wide-ranging advice and guidance for schools on all aspects of child protection, including the action to be taken to enable cases of suspected abuse to be properly considered and pursued. It was drawn up in conjunction with representatives from the Department, the five Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic and Maintained Schools and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. Education and Library Boards base their child protection training of designated/deputy designated child protection teachers, new Principals/teachers and Boards of Governors on the advice contained in this publication which is available on the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/teachers/circulars/dcl999–10–2.pdf.

Child Support

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of non-payment by parents of child support are pending adjudication in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [22676]

Mr. Hanson: There is no provision within child support legislation to allow cases of non-payment of child support to be subjected to any process of adjudication.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many parents in the Province have been found to be avoiding paying the correct amount of child support since the establishment of the Child Support Agency. [22677]

Mr. Hanson: There is no mechanism within child support legislation to allow parents to be found innocent or guilty of avoiding paying the correct amount of child support maintenance.

Common Fisheries Policy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, with particular reference to the implications for Northern Ireland. [22648]

Angela E. Smith: The new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was introduced on 1 January 2003, following extensive consultation with stakeholders across Europe.

The Government's plans for further reform of the CFP are set out in "Securing the Benefits", the joint UK response to the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report on the future of the fishing industry in the UK. This sets out our priorities to:

Ensure effective integration of the new Regional Advisory Councils into the policy development and decision making process

Examine ways of improving the governance of the CFP

Improve and simplify the regulatory environment

Tackle the issue of discarding through pilot projects.

The North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council was launched on 30 September 2005. Northern Ireland stakeholders are represented on the Executive Committee and the Irish Sea sub-group.

A discussion of how to improve the annual fisheries decision making process was held at the meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers in Luxembourg on 24 October. This focused on possible changes to the fishing year to allow more time for consideration of Commission proposals for fishing quotas which are normally published in December, and on ways of bringing forward discussion on related issues. The Commission is working on an Action Plan for simplification of the CFP which is on the agenda for the December meeting of the Fisheries Council.

Northern Ireland officials and stakeholders have been involved in the various groups that played a key role in drawing up Securing the Benefits, and will be involved in on-going follow-up work, including simplification, regulation, and environmental issues.

Costello Working Group

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the reasons why the Department for Education and Skills believes that it would not be in the public interest to disclose the minutes and discussion papers of the Costello Working Group. [20890]

Angela E. Smith: After consideration and discussion with the Information Commissioner, the minutes of the meetings of the Post-Primary Review Working Group were disclosed and are available on the Department's website (www.deni.gov.uk).

Elements of the papers prepared for discussion by the group were incorporated in the disclosed minutes. The Department of Education is currently considering whether the disclosure of the remaining elements of those papers would compromise members of future expert groups being able to have a free and frank exchange of views and provide advice to assist in the formulation of policy free from disclosure. I will write to the hon. Gentleman when that consideration has been completed.

Credit Union/Community Banking

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research has been undertaken to ensure best value in encouraging growth in the credit union and community banking sector in Northern Ireland. [22813]

Angela E. Smith: As part of its current three-year Corporate Plan, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is committed to exploring new ways to encourage the further development of the Credit Union sector in Northern Ireland.

Early in 2003, DETI initiated a major review of its policy on Credit Unions, including a conference involving key stakeholders in the sector in June 2003 and a number of workshops in 2004.

On the back of this, DETI expects to make new statutory rules later this year which will enable the credit union movement to develop its potential and play a fuller role in Northern Ireland's social economy.

They will:

raise the limit on deposit accounts for junior members of Credit Unions from £1,000 to £10,000;

extend the maximum repayment period for secured loans made by Credit Unions from 4 to 5 years;

raise the limit on individual members' savings to the greater of £15,000 or 1.5 per cent. of the Credit Union's total shareholding;

raise the limit on individual members' savings to the greater of £15,000 or 1.5 per cent. of the Credit Union's total shareholding; and

remove the limit on the number of people who may be members of a particular Credit Union.

Dairy Prices

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with the dairy industry on pricing of dairy products in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [22651]

Angela E. Smith: I have not had any discussions with the dairy industry on the pricing of dairy products. This is a purely commercial matter in which Government cannot get involved, as long as competition rules are respected. However, following the recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy it is vital that the Northern Ireland dairy industry embraces change. It is therefore encouraging to note that the industry is being proactive

to the challenges which it faces, by seeking to improve efficiency and increase the production of high added-value products. This combined with collaboration between the various parts of the food chain is a good road map to ensure the future sustainability of the dairy industry.

Departmental Refurbishment

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in the (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07 financial years. [18232]

Angela E. Smith: A table providing details of building and refurbishment projects planned by NI Departments in the 2005–06 and 2006–07 financial years has been placed in the Library.

Disability Vehicles

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were in receipt of a disability vehicle due to receiving the high rate mobility disability living allowance in each of the last five years, broken down by district area. [22888]

Mr. Hanson: The Motability Scheme is administered by Motability, an independent UK-wide charity. The following table provides details of the number of people in Northern Ireland who obtained a motability vehicle in each of the last five years. It is not possible to provide such information by geographical area, as this information is held only on a Northern Ireland wide basis.

1 April to 31 March	*Number of customers who availed of the Motability Scheme*
2000–01	24,178
2001–02	23,435
2002–03	23,481
2003–04	23,608
2004–05	24,332

Economic Vision

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made towards the goal of publishing a strategy to support the delivery of the Economic Vision for Northern Ireland. [22330]

Angela E. Smith: Delivering the Economic Vision will require concerted action from both the public and private sectors. For its part Government will produce a regional economic strategy which will set out the policy framework for delivering the Economic Vision. These strategies, requested by Treasury, are being produced for the regions across the UK.

The Northern Ireland strategy is currently being drafted by DFP in collaboration with the other Government departments. The intention is to circulate a draft for wider consideration before the end of this year.

Education and Library Boards

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many education and library boards in Northern Ireland have not had their accounts signed off in each of the last five years. [21232]

Angela E. Smith: The number of year end accounts for the last five years for the education and library boards in Northern Ireland which have not yet been certified is as follows:

	Year end accounts not yet certified
2000–01	0
2001–02	1
2002–03	2
2003–04	4
2004–05	5

Electronic Human Resources

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the procurement process used in relation to the Northern Ireland Civil Service electronic human resources contract. [21887]

Angela E. Smith: The procurement process is currently ongoing and is being conducted strictly in accordance with the Negotiated Procedure of the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 (As Amended).

Empty Homes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many empty homes there are in *(a)* public sector housing and *(b)* private sector housing in the Strangford constituency. [22829]

Mr. Hanson: There are 302 empty housing executive homes in the Strangford area. The information is not held in the format requested for private sector properties. However, it is estimated that there are around 1,680 vacant properties in the Ards and Down council areas which mainly cover the Strangford constituency.

Energy Efficiency (Pensioner Homes)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the quality of publicly funded installation of central heating and insulation in pensioners' homes in Northern Ireland. [22748]

Mr. Hanson: Eaga Partnership inspects all central heating installations provided in pensioners' homes under the Warm Homes Scheme and inspects 5 per cent. of the insulations. In addition, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as quality assurance auditors for the scheme, carries out monthly audits on both heating and insulation installations.

This system of inspection ensures that work is completed to a high standard.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he has monitored customer satisfaction with publicly funded work carried out to install central heating and insulation in pensioners' homes in Northern Ireland. [22749]

Mr. Hanson: Customer satisfaction of work carried out under the Warm Homes Scheme is monitored by Eaga Partnership, scheme managers, who complete 20 customer satisfaction questionnaires each month and

proactively deal with any issues that may arise. In addition, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) carries out an annual customer satisfaction survey.

The level of customer satisfaction remains very high at around 93 per cent.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints he has received against *(a)* Eaga Partnership Ltd. and *(b)* its subcontractors in respect of publicly funded programmes to install central heating and insulation in pensioners' homes. [22750]

Mr. Hanson: Since the Warm Homes Scheme commenced in 2001 the Department for Social Development has received *(a)* eight complaints about Eaga Partnership Ltd. and *(b)* eleven complaints about subcontractors in respect of the programmes to install central heating and insulation in pensioners' homes.

Fisheries

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many licences have been applied for by Northern Ireland fisheries boards to cull piscivorous birds in each of the last five years; how many applications for such licences were approved; and how many birds were shot under each licence, broken down by species. [22800]

Angela E. Smith: There are no fisheries boards in Northern Ireland. However, applications for 15 licences were received from organisations that could be classified as fisheries boards. All of these licences were granted. A total of 215 Cormorants were shot under these licences; no other species of bird was shot.

The breakdown of licences is as follows.

Department of Culture Arts and Leisure

	Number applied for	*Number granted*	*Number shot*
2000	1	1	29
2001	1	1	6
2002	1	1	30
2003	1	1	0
2004	1	1	30
2005 (To date)	1	1	30

Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission

	Number applied for	*Number granted*	*Number shot*
2000	2	2	[1]20
2001	2	2	[1]20
2002	1	1	10
2003	2	2	[1]20
2004	2	2	[1]20
2005 (To date)	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—

[1] 10 under each licence.
[2] None.

Fujitsu

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information the Fujitsu Services Ltd. consortium bidding for the Northern Ireland Civil Service Electronic Human Resources Contract has provided to his Department regarding its experience of human resources outsourcing work. [22780]

Angela E. Smith: The Fujitsu Services Limited Consortium has provided information on its experience of human resources outsourcing both in its response to the Invitation to Negotiate and in its Best and Final Offer submission.

The procurement process is still ongoing and as such commercially sensitive information cannot be released at this stage.

Gap Year Funding

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy to seek the creation of a gap year travel fund initiative for school leavers in Northern Ireland. [22765]

Angela E. Smith: There are no plans to introduce such a measure.

General Practitioners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioners per head of population there are in the Province broken down by constituencies; and if he will make a statement. [22646]

Mr. Woodward: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency	*GPs per 10,000 population*[1, 2, 3]
Belfast East	8.4
Belfast North	10.7
Belfast South	7.0
Belfast West	6.3
East Antrim	4.9
East Londonderry	6.2
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	7.6
Foyle	7.0
Lagan Valley	5.4
Mid Ulster	4.8
Newry and Armagh	6.8
North Antrim	7.1
North Down	5.0
South Antrim	5.1
South Down	5.1
Strangford	5.3
Upper Bann	6.3
West Tyrone	6.0

[1] Figures are derived from the Medlist Database maintained by the Central Services Agency, which holds data on the headcount number of individual general practitioners in Northern Ireland. The figures refer to unrestricted principals at 3 October 2005.
[2] The source of the population figures is Demography and Methodology Branch of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The figures refer to the mid-year estimate of population at June 2004.
[3] Figures are based on the location of each general practice in Northern Ireland.
Source:
Central Services Agency

Hazardous Waste

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated cost of dealing with illegal dumping of hazardous waste in the Province has been over the last three year period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [22645]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service does not hold details of the cost of dealing with illegally dumped hazardous waste. District councils

have a statutory responsibility for dealing with fly-tipped hazardous waste, and bearing the costs of its disposal.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost to the Northern Ireland economy of illegal dumping in the Province of *(a)* waste and *(b)* hazardous waste originating from the Irish Republic over the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [22819]

Angela E. Smith: The estimated cost of cleaning up the illegal landfill sites is in the order of £25 million. The Department of the Environment does not have details of the cost of any hazardous waste originating in the Republic of Ireland which may have been dumped in Northern Ireland in the last three years.

Human Resources Contract

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list consultancy firms engaged by each Northern Ireland Department to advise on the electronic Human Resources Contract *(a)* prior to and *(b)* during the process overseen by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Project Board. [22143]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Prior to the process

No consultancy firm was engaged to advise on the electronic Human Resources Contract prior to the process overseen by the Northern Ireland Civil Service Project Board.

During the process

Legal advice is provided by Denton Wilde Sapte appointed by the Strategic Investment Board.

DFP appointed Deloitte MCS Limited and Grant Thornton UK LLP to advise on the her contract.

Preparatory advice on Service Levels was provided by Deloitte MCS Limited between March and May 2004.

Financial advice was provided by Deloitte MCS Limited from March 2004 to May 2005, Grant Thornton UK LLP have been providing financial advice to the project from May 2005.

Ilex Company

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 647W, on Ilex Company, what criteria were used to select the companies used for recruitment of staff by Ilex; and which companies were used in that recruitment process. [22933]

Mr. Hanson: There were two competitions, the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer and the recruitment of senior staff.

The criteria used in each competition were:

Methodology—this provides details of the process to be followed including how the process is tailored to the particular post and the value added by an executive search.

Experience and qualifications of company and staff, including evidence of having experience recruiting in this sector.

Cost.

Veredus Executive Resourcing, Birmingham, was appointed for the recruitment of the Chief Executive.

Deloitte MCS Limited, Belfast, was appointed for the recruitment of the senior staff.

Licensing Hours

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from senior police officers on the proposed extension of drinking hours in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [22630]

Mr. Hanson: A senior representative from the Police Service of Northern Ireland is represented on the steering group that has been involved in developing proposals for the reform of liquor licensing in Northern Ireland. Account was also taken of a survey of PSNI district commanders and regional headquarters carried out in October 2004. I have kept PSNI fully appraised of the final package of measures I put forward for consultation. A senior PSNI officer spoke in support of the measures at the launch of the consultation in Belfast on 1 November

Maintained Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students attended the Northern Ireland maintained primary school sector in each of the last five years. [22433]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupils in maintained primary schools in Northern Ireland

	Catholic maintained schools	*Other maintained schools*	*Total maintained schools*
2000–01	80,059	1,368	81,427
2001–02	78,742	1,643	80,385
2002–03	77,233	1,809	79,042
2003–04	76,034	1,942	77,976
2004–05	74,849	2,032	76,881

Note:
Figures relate to pupils in year 1 to year 7 only.

Minimum Wage

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact on employment levels of the recent minimum wage increase, with particular reference to small and medium businesses in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [22678]

Angela E. Smith: The latest available assessment is the Low Pay Commission's "The Impact of the National Minimum Wage" (February 2005). The Low Pay Commission (LPC) is the statutory body whose role is to advise and make recommendations to the Government on the national minimum wage (NMW). The LPC report states that the NMW has had no significant adverse effects on business and employment creation. However, the report notes that the NMW is likely to have the most impact in those regions with the highest proportions of low paid employment, namely the North East, the East Midlands, Wales and Northern Ireland.

When the minimum wage was first introduced there was concern that it would lead to an increase in the level and rate of unemployment. These fears have not

materialised at either a national or regional level. Since the introduction of the NMW in 1999, Northern Ireland's unemployment rate has fallen from 7.5 per cent. and is currently 4.6 per cent. (UK = 4.7 per cent.). Furthermore, it is encouraging to note that since the NMW was introduced in 1999, the growth in Northern Ireland employment (10.7 per cent.) is almost twice that of the UK (5.4 per cent.).

MRSA

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to raise awareness of MRSA in Northern Ireland. [22757]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety is taking steps to raise awareness of MRSA as follows:

an MRSA patient information leaflet which provides relevant data on the origins, symptoms and treatment of the disease has recently been updated. The leaflet is available throughout the health service and is accessible on the DHSSPS website:

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publichealth

an antimicrobial resistance and hand hygiene TV advertising campaign was launched in 2004 and re-run in 2005.The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the need for good hand hygiene and also to emphasise the need to reduce the use of antibiotics.

In June the Department launched a consultation document, "A Strategy for Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections in Northern Ireland 2005–10". This document was issued to the HPSS, patient representatives and the general public. Responses to the consultation are being analysed at present and arising from this a detailed action plan will be launched at a major conference on the subject of infection control which the Department is hosting in Belfast in March 2006.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to improve *(a)* availability and *(b)* delivery of disease modifying treatments for multiple sclerosis sufferers in Northern Ireland. [23363]

Mr. Woodward: Disease modifying treatments for people with multiple sclerosis have been available in Northern Ireland since the mid-1990s. At 30 September 2005, there were 576 patients receiving treatment with disease modifying therapies.

In 2002–03, an additional £3 million was allocated to Health and Social Services Boards for a range of specialist medicines, including disease modifying therapies for people with multiple sclerosis. £100,000 was also allocated in 2002–03 specifically to enhance the infrastructure for delivery of disease modifying treatments for multiple sclerosis sufferers, including the appointment of specialist MS nurses and additional pharmacy staff.. Further additional funding of £5 million for specialist hospital drugs has been allocated in the current financial year.

It is for the Health and Social Services Boards, as commissioners of services, to prioritise how funding is used, taking into account the competing demands and pressures in their areas and the strategic objectives and priorities of my Department. This year, the Boards will spend an estimated £4.7 million providing disease modifying treatment to multiple sclerosis sufferers.

NHS Dentistry

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many NHS general dental practitioners *(a)* there were and *(b)* ceased to provide NHS general dental services in each Northern Ireland health Board area in each of the last five years. [22807]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

(a) A dentist may hold a contract with more than one Health and Social Services Board depending on their geographical area. Information on the number of General Dental Practitioner (GDP) contracts for 2004 and 2005 by Board area is detailed in the following table. This table also details total GDP headcount figures for 2004 and 2005. The equivalent figures for 2001–03 were not available.

NHS GDP contracts by Board area and total number of GDP's

Headcount Board area	October 2004	October 2005
Northern	320	336
Eastern	188	195
Southern	138	155
Western	116	121
Total NI dental contracts	762	807
Total headcount	722	760

Source:
Central Services Agency

(b) In the year October 2004 to October 2005 there were 31 dentists (32 contracts) who left the health service. The contract figures spilt by Board area are detailed in the following table. The figures for previous years 2001–04 are not available.

Number of NHS GDP contracts by Board area and total number of GDP's who have left the health service

Board area	Headcount October 2004 to October 2005
Northern	13
Eastern	9
Southern	3
Western	7
Total NI Dental contracts	32
Total headcount	31

Source:
Central Services Agency

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* abolished and *(b)* established since 1998. [22793]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office have abolished 41 and created 26 non-departmental public bodies (including Executive, Advisory and Tribunal non-departmental public bodies) from 1 January 1998 to date.

Over-30-month Scheme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the over-30-month scheme. [22650]

Angela E. Smith: It was announced on 15 September that the UK Government have accepted the FSA's advice that the OTM Rule can be replaced by BSE testing for cattle born on or after 1 August 1996. To allow for new legislation to be put in place across all regions of the UK, implementation will be effective from 7 November 2005. Only cattle which test negative for BSE will enter the food chain.

The over thirty month scheme (OTMS) will continue to run until the older cattle disposal scheme (OCDS), for animals born prior to 1 August 1996, is in place. This is likely to be January 2006 but in the interim, producers will have the choice of sending animals born on or after 1 August 1996 either to the OTMS, or for human consumption.

Planning Applications

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications have been referred to a management board in each local government area in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and how many were in favour of the applicant. [22809]

Angela E. Smith: The following table illustrates the number of planning applications that were referred to the planning service's management board for determination by each local council area in each year from 1 January 2000 to 31 September 2005, along with the number that were approved. A total of 905 applications were referred, 198 of which were approved.

Number of management board referrals and approvals for each council area from 1 January 2000 to 31 September 2005

Council	2000		2001		2002	
	Referred	Approved	Referred	Approved	Referred	Approved
Antrim	1	0	2	2	0	0
Ards	13	3	8	3	7	2
Armagh	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ballymena	4	3	5	2	4	0
Ballymoney	11	0	2	0	2	0
Banbridge	1	1	0	0	1	0
Belfast	2	1	1	1	3	3
Carrickfergus	6	5	7	6	3	2
Castlereagh	16	5	3	2	4	1
Coleraine	5	3	7	4	7	4
Cooks town	8	0	0	0	2	1
Craigavon	1	0	1	0	2	2
Derry	0	0	1	1	0	0
Down	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1	0	4	0	0	0
Fermanagh	6	1	17	1	12	0
Larne	6	3	1	0	3	1
Limavady	1	0	2	2	0	0
Lisburn	0	0	5	0	9	5
Magherafelt	8	1	8	0	20	0
Moyle	4	0	1	0	8	2
Newry and Mourne	1	0	3	0	9	2
Newtownabbey	0	0	6	5	3	3
North Down	5	3	19	16	14	12
Omagh	3	0	0	0	4	1
Strabane	3	2	0	0	6	0
Total	106	35	104	46	123	39

Council	2003		2004		2005 (so far)	
	Referred	Approved	Referred	Approved	Referred	Approved
Antrim	0	0	0	0	2	0
Ards	11	5	8	4	3	0
Armagh	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ballymena	3	0	1	0	1	0
Ballymoney	2	2	1	0	4	0
Banbridge	0	0	1	1	0	0
Belfast	2	2	3	1	2	0
Carrickfergus	4	4	3	2	6	0
Castlereagh	2	1	4	1	3	0
Coleraine	2	2	5	4	0	0
Cooks town	1	0	10	0	3	0
Craigavon	3	1	3	1	0	0
Derry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Down	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dungannon and South Tyrone	1	0	1	0	0	0
Fermanagh	6	0	3	0	0	0
Larne	5	4	10	4	6	2
Limavady	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lisburn	10	1	14	5	162	0
Magherafelt	25	1	5	0	4	0

Council	2003 Referred	2003 Approved	2004 Referred	2004 Approved	2005 (so far) Referred	2005 (so far) Approved
Moyle	10	3	5	0	10	0
Newry and Mourne	21	0	19	6	3	0
Newtownabbey	4	3	3	1	1	0
North Down	13	11	14	8	4	0
Omagh	21	0	77	1	14	0
Strabane	0	0	0	0	4	0
Total	146	39	192	39	234	2

Public Transport

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to encourage the development in Northern Ireland of public transport that is more easily accessible. [22817]

Mr. Woodward: In April this year the Department for Regional Development published its Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland, the aim of which is to remove barriers to travel experienced by older people and people with disabilities. The associated Action Plan includes a wide range of projects to make public transport more accessible.

Translink has received £48 million capital grant from the Department to buy 292 new fully accessible vehicles to be brought into service this year and next. Translink's 23 new trains comply with the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations. DRD is also providing 6m capital grant to enable Translink to improve accessibility at train stations and halts.

DRD is introducing demand responsive bus services to improve accessibility for those who are unable to access the conventional public transport network. These include door-to-door services in 29 urban areas for people with disabilities and two demand responsive transport pilots serving rural areas. The Rural Transport Fund will continue to support accessible services provided by 18 Rural Community Transport Partnerships across Northern Ireland.

DRD is working closely with Translink to ensure that transport information is accessible to all and that disabled people are made aware of the range of new accessible transport opportunities becoming available.

Recycling

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on levels of recycling in the Province. [22653]

Angela E. Smith: I am encouraged by the increase in recycling levels within Northern Ireland, between 2002 and the last financial year. The municipal waste recycling rate more than doubled, increasing from 8.9 per cent. to a figure of 18.2 per cent. The household recycling rate increased from 10 per cent. to 18.2 per cent. The overall amount of household waste collected for recycling and composting increased by over 90 per cent. All district councils achieved increases in the household recycling rate and two district councils achieved a household recycling rate of almost 40 per cent.

Regional Rates

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average percentage change in regional rates in Northern Ireland is expected to be over the next two financial years. [23235]

Angela E. Smith: The Draft Priorities and Budget 2006–08, published on 25 October 2005, sets out proposed increases in the Regional Domestic Rate of 19 per cent. in 2006–07 and 6 per cent. in 2007–08.

For the Non-Domestic Regional Rate an increase of 3.3 per cent. is proposed for each year.

These proposals are now subject to a period of public consultation, ahead of final decisions in early December.

Renewable Technologies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made with the provision of support for the development of renewable technologies in Northern Ireland. [22753]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation, which was introduced on 1 April 2005, is the main support mechanism for stimulating the supply of electricity from renewable sources and is available across all renewable technologies.

In addition, the draft Budget proposal, announced on 25 October 2005 by my hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, created a new Environment and Energy Fund to accelerate the development of renewable technologies.

The Fund will complement and significantly enhance existing support initiatives by allocating £10 million in 2006–07 and £25 million in 2007–08 for capital investment in renewable energy with a further £5 million and £10 million in the respective years being earmarked for encouraging research and development of renewable forms of energy. This will help secure energy from biomass, waste, geothermal, solar and tidal stream power sources and will also encourage scope for the use of bio-fuels. Furthermore, it will, in turn, raise innovation and skills levels and also offer significant opportunities for the creation of new rural businesses involved in renewable energy supply. Additionally, householders will be assisted to incorporate renewable energy within their homes thereby reducing both their dependence on fossil fuels and also overall energy costs.

Schools

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote sport in schools in Northern Ireland. [22662]

Angela E. Smith: Physical Education is compulsory for all pupils because of its important contribution to health and fitness. Schools are encouraged to give pupils at least two hours of PE a week and provide a range of sporting activities to develop all pupils and make the subject enjoyable. The Sports Council's Youth Sport programme supports a number of projects across primary and post-primary schools to help young people develop in a range of sports.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools are broadband enabled in Northern Ireland. [22751]

Angela E. Smith: Of a total of 1,189 grant-aided schools, 1,181 have broadband access. The Department of Education does not hold information relating to broadband access in the 17 independent schools.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his assessment is of the level of sectarianism in schools in Northern Ireland; and what measures he proposes to take to tackle the issue. [22795]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not make a formal assessment of sectarianism in schools. However, it believes that education has a key role in addressing the causes of sectarianism, which continues to be a challenge in Northern Irish society.

Schools are currently required to teach the cross-curricular themes of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage, which aim to foster improved community relations. This will continue with the introduction of Citizenship Education as a key theme of the revised curriculum.

To support this Scheme, the Department funds the Schools' Community Relations Programme which aims to encourage schools to bring together young people from across the community divide through programmes of activity designed to promote community relations in schools.

The Department is also committed to progressing the recommendations for education as set out in "A Shared Future". The recommendations include co-ordinated action involving schools, teacher training, curricular development and the Youth Service to promote better relations among young people.

Services (Older People)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps have been taken towards the improvement of services for older people in Northern Ireland. [21423]

Angela E. Smith: The Older People's Strategy, "Ageing in an Inclusive Society" was launched in March 2005 and includes an Implementation Plan which identifies actions for Northern Ireland Government Departments aimed at, among other things, improving the services of older people.

A review of progress will be undertaken in mid November and I will place a report in the Library at that time.

Social Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many social housing new build completions there have been in each year since 2001 in Northern Ireland. [24063]

Mr. Hanson: The number of social houses completed is as follows:

	Number
2001–02	1,763
2002–03	1,295
2003–04	854
2004–05	1,073

The figures include new build and houses purchased from the open market either in good condition or for rehabilitation, prior to letting. All are additions to social housing stock.

Social Security Agency

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestant, *(b)* Roman Catholic and *(c)* non-determined appointees there have been to the Social Security Agency in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [22932]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to give details of the community background of staff appointed to the Social Security Agency over the last 12 months as it is an offence under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (subject to specified exceptions) to disclose information on the community background of staff which has been obtained or used for the purposes of monitoring.

Staff Assaults

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what costs were incurred by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety resulting from attacks on front line hospital staff in *(a)* treatment, *(b)* lost working hours and *(c)* resignation of staff in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [22633]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Stranmillis College

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those organisations and individuals who responded to the consultation process on the governance arrangements to be adopted following incorporation of the Stranmillis College

Equality Impact Assessment; and which organisations and individuals proposed the removal of the Transferor representatives from the Governing Body, of Stranmillis. [22329]

Angela E. Smith: Following the proposal to establish Stranmillis University College as a legally independent higher education institution accountable to a corporate governing body, an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was conducted on the specific governance arrangements to be subsequently detailed in the Instrument of Government, as provided for in the then draft order. The Equality Impact Assessment was issued for public consultation in March 2005.

The organisations and individuals who responded to the consultation process were:

Board of Education of the Methodist Church in Ireland;

Church of Ireland Board of Education Northern Ireland;

Disability Action;

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

James Nelson and Norman Richardson (Lecturers in Religious Studies at Stranmillis University College);

John Erskine (of the Library at Stranmillis University College);

Northern Ireland Regional Office of NATFHE;

Stranmillis University College Board of Governors;

Stranmillis University College Branch of NATFHE; and

Transferor Representatives Council.

The organisations and individuals that did not support continued representation by the three main Protestant Churches on the Board of Governors were:

James Nelson and Norman Richardson (Lecturers in Religious Studies at Stranmillis University College);

Northern Ireland Regional Office of NATFHE;

Stranmillis University College Board of Governors; and

Stranmillis University College Branch of NATFHE.

Teacher Assaults

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many school teachers were *(a)* physically and *(b)* verbally abused by (i) pupils and (ii) parents in the Province in each of the last five years. [22661]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the requested information. However in relation to pupils, from the 2002–03 school year, statistics on the reasons for suspensions have been gathered annually from each Education and Library Board. The following tables illustrate the number of suspensions for verbal abuse of, and physical attacks on, staff for the 2002–03 and 2003–04 school years:

Suspensions for abuse of staff by pupils in the school year

Reason for suspension	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
2002–03			
Verbal abuse of staff	1,683	343	2,026
Physical attack on staff	320	45	365
2003–04			
Verbal abuse of staff	1,867	403	2,270
Physical attack on staff	281	39	320

It should be noted that these figures relate to the number of individual suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended. These figures are also available on the Department's website www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures/education_stats/suspension_stats.htm. Statistics are not yet available for the 2004–05 school year.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many instances there have been of attacks on teaching staff in schools in Northern Ireland during the course of their work in each of the last five years. [22855]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the requested information. However, from the 2002/03 school year, statistics on the reasons for suspensions have been gathered annually from each Education and Library Board. The following tables illustrate the number of suspensions for verbal abuse of, and physical attacks on, staff for the 2002/03 and 2003/04 school years:

Number of suspensions for abuse of staff by pupils in the 2002–03 school year

	Reason for suspension	
	Verbal abuse of staff	*Physical attack on staff*
Male	1,683	320
Female	343	45
Total	2,026	365

Number of suspensions for abuse of staff by pupils in the 2003/04 school year

	Reason for suspension	
	Verbal abuse of staff	*Physical attack on staff*
Male	1,867	281
Female	403	39
Total	2,270	320

It should be noted that these figures relate to the number of individual suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended.

These figures are available on the Department's website at:
www.deni.gov.uk/facts_figures/education_stats/suspension_stats.htm
Statistics are not yet available for the 2004/05 school year.

Teenage Smokers

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of *(a)* female and *(b)* male secondary level sixth formers at schools in Northern Ireland are estimated to be smokers. [22854]

Angela E. Smith: Information for sixth form pupils is not available. However, the Continuous Household Survey results for 2004–05 showed that 29 per cent. of 16 to 24-year-olds smoke.

University Admissions

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy to offer financial support to enable people in Northern Ireland to return to university following redundancy. [22792]

Angela E. Smith: There is no specific financial support targeted at people returning to university after redundancy. A comprehensive package of student support is available for all eligible students entering

higher education including means tested fee remission and bursaries aimed at less well off students, as well as maintenance loans. This support is available for students undertaking their first primary degree.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have received winter fuel payments in *(a)* Strangford and *(b)* all other constituencies in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [22818]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the number of awards of winter fuel payments for 2004–05 which is the latest year for which the information is available. Strangford constituency has been highlighted in italic.

Parliamentary constituency	*Total*
Belfast East	17,334
Belfast North	16,212
Belfast South	15,276
Belfast West	12,424
East Antrim	15,344
East Londonderry	14,566
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	14,464
Foyle	13,409
Lagan Valley	17,952
Mid Ulster	12,527
Newry and Armagh	15,623
North Antrim	19,257
North Down	18,288
South Antrim	16,347
South Down	16,758
Strangford	*17,910*
Upper Bann	16,833
West Tyrone	12,643
Missing postcode	676
Total	283,843

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 2 November 2005

WALES

Electoral System (National Assembly)

11. **Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has for reforming the electoral system for the National Assembly for Wales. [22535]

Mr. Hain: The Government proposals to address problems with the current electoral system are set out in chapter 4 of the "Better Governance for Wales" White Paper, which was published on 15 June 2005.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the Government's proposals to reform the system of election of members of the National Assembly for Wales Government. [21708]

Mr. Hain: The Government's proposals to address problems with the current electoral system are set out in Chapter 4 of the "Better Governance for Wales" White Paper, which was published on 15 June 2005.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales on future voting arrangements for elections; and if he will make a statement. [23049]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with colleagues in the National Assembly for Wales.

The Government's proposals to address the electoral system are set out in Chapter 4 of "Better Governance for Wales", White Paper which was published on 15 June 2005.

Council Tax Rebanding

12. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with National Assembly for Wales Ministers on council tax rebanding. [22537]

Mr. Hain: I regularly meet the First Minister to discuss matters affecting Wales.

Road Safety

13. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with police forces in Wales on improving road safety. [22538]

Nick Ainger: My right hon. Friend and I have regular discussions with police forces in Wales on a variety of issues including road safety.

Under the Government's road safety strategy we are seeking a 40 per cent. reduction in deaths and serious injuries by 2010. The Road Safety Bill currently being considered in the other place will help make this possible.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

14. **Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures are being taken to tackle drug and alcohol abuse in Wales. [22539]

Nick Ainger: Wales is tackling drug and alcohol misuse by the delivery of its national substance misuse strategy. The strategy in Wales is implemented at a local level by the 22 Community Safety Partnerships via the delivery of their action plans.

Dentistry

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Department of Health on the availability of NHS dental services in Wales. [22536]

Nick Ainger: I regularly meet with the Assembly Health Minister to discuss dental services in Wales. In addition, following last Friday's meeting with National Assembly Wales, Department of Health and the British Dental Service to discuss Dental contracts in the UK, my hon. Friend Peter Hain will be meeting the Secretary of State for Health tomorrow to discuss the on-going negotiations on the new dental contracts for England and Wales.

Devolution

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales who he has consulted on the future of devolution for Wales in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [23048]

Mr. Hain: Following the launch of the Government's White Paper "Better Governance for Wales" on June 15, there was a comment period, which finished on September 16. Eighty-two responses were received, and they can be found on the Wales Office website.

English Hospital Treatments

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh patients were treated in English hospitals in the last year for which figures are available. [18673]

Mr. Hain: 38, 665 Welsh patients were treated in English hospitals last year.

It is important that patients are able to access treatment, including specialist treatment, at the nearest hospital. Due to medical and geographical reasons, some provision of services has always been across border.

Continuous improvements are being made in the management of cross border referrals, and a joint protocol was launched in March of this year to clarify responsibilities and guide health commissioners in managing patient flows.

Youth Crime

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on youth crime in Wales. [22805]

Mr. Hain: The Government are supporting a wide-ranging programme to tackle youth offending and to prevent children being drawn into crime in the first place. This includes tackling deprivation and working with families and education services, along with on-going implementation of the 10-year anti-drugs strategy. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister recently announced a major new drive to increase the take-up of parenting contracts and orders, as part of our strategy for fostering respect in society.

WORK AND PENSIONS

50-plus Year-Olds

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many adults aged between 50 and state pension age there were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005; and how many were in work in each year. [23284]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Neil Gerrard, dated 2 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number of adults aged between 50 and state pension age in 1997 and 2005; and how many of them were in employment. (23284)

The attached table provides the available information. The table covers the three month period ending in August of the years 1997 and 2005.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

People aged between 50 to state pension age1; levels and rates2. United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted

Three month period ending August	Total	Of which: in employment (Thousand)	Rate (percentage)2
All persons			
1997	8,072	5,206	64.5
2005	9,060	6,380	70.4
Men			
1997	4,685	3,154	67.3
2005	5,233	3,782	72.3
Women			
1997	3,387	2,052	60.6
2005	3,827	2,598	67.9

1 Covering men aged 50 to 64 and women aged 50 to 59 in private households, student halls of residence and NHS accommodation.
2. Number of people in employment as a percentage of all persons in the relevant age group.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

EDS

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he last met representatives of EDS. [17584]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, met with Michael Jordan, Chairman and Chief Executive of EDS on 27 July 2005. Officials from the Department meet with EDS executives on a regular basis.

Pensioner Benefits

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Kettering constituency received *(a)* the state pension, *(b)* applied for pension credit and *(c)* received the pension credit in each year since 1997. [22602]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Information is not available on the number of pension credit applicants at constituency level.

The information available is presented in the following two tables.

Table 1: State pension caseload for the Kettering parliamentary constituency for March 2000 to May 2005

Date	Total (thousands)
May 2005	19.0
May 2004	18.6
May 2003	18.3
May 2002	18.0
March 2002	18.3
March 2001	18.2
March 2000	17.8

Notes:
1. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
2. The figures for March 2000 to March 2002 are based on data from the 5 percent. samples.
3. The figures for May 2002 to May 2005 are directly from the WPLS 100 percent. data.

Source:
DWP Information directorate: Work and Pensions longitudinal study.

Table 2: Pension credit caseload for the Kettering parliamentary constituency for November 2003 to May 2005

Date	Total (thousands)
May 2005	4.3
May 2004	4.0
November 2003	3.2

Notes:
1. Pension credit was introduced on 6 October 2003 and replaced minimum income guarantee (income support for people aged-60 or over). The vast majority of people who were previously in receipt of the minimum income guarantee transferred to pension credit in October 2003.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
DWP Information directorate: Work and Pensions longitudinal study 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency have received *(a)* the Christmas bonus, *(b)* the over-80s age top-up and *(c)* winter fuel payments in each year since 1997. [23884]

Mr. Timms: The available information on the Christmas Bonus is in the table below and is based on the estimates of state pension recipients.

Date	*Estimated numbers of Christmas bonus payable in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency*
September 1999	17,000
September 2000	16,700
September 2001	16,500
November 2002	16,000
November 2003	15,900
November 2004	16,000

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
3. The figures for September 1999 to March 2002 are based on data from the 5 per cent. samples.
4. The figures for May 2002 to May 2005 are directly from the WPLS 100 per cent. data.
5. Data sources are not available prior to September 1999.

Source:
WP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data and 5 per cent. samples.

We do not collect information on the over 80s age top up of 25p a week by constituency, however, they are comparable with the figures shown for the 80+ annual payment in the table.

Information relating to winter fuel payments for the winters of 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available. The information for Kingston and Surbiton constituency from winter 1999–2000 is in the table, including details of the 80+ annual payment introduced in winter 2003–04 and now included as part of the winter fuel payment to those aged 80 or over. These figures are also available in the Library.

	Winter fuel payments made in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency	*80 + annual payments made in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency*
1999–2000	16,780	
2000–01	18,045	80 + Annual Payments
2001–02	18,100	were first made in 2003
2002–03	17,990	
2003–04	17,910	4,365
2004–05	17,790	4,270

Notes:
1. Data is taken at the specified dates.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
4. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
5. Those receiving the 80 + annual payment are also receiving a winter fuel payment.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Kingston and Surbiton constituency have *(a)* received the state pension, *(b)* applied for pension credit and *(c)* received the pension credit in each year since 1997. [23885]

Mr. Timms: Information is not available on the number of pension credit applicants at constituency level.

The information available is presented in the following two tables.

Table 1: State pension caseload for the Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency for March 2000 to May 2005.

Date	*Total (thousands)*
May 2005	15.9
May 2004	16.0
May 2003	16.0
May 2002	16.2
March 2002	16.2
March 2001	16.2
March 2000	16.7

Notes:
1. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
2. The figures for March 2000 to March 2002 are based on data from the 5 percent. samples.
3. The figures for May 2002 to May 2005 are directly from the WPLS 100 percent. data.

Source:
DWP Information directorate: Work and Pensions longitudinal study

Table 2: Pension credit caseload for the Kingston and Surbiton parliamentary constituency for November 2003 to May 2005.

Date	*Total (thousands)*
May 2005	3.0
May 2004	2.7
November 2003	2.3

Notes:
1. Pension credit was introduced on 6 October 2003 and replaced minimum income guarantee (income support for people aged-60 or over). The vast majority of people who were previously in receipt of the minimum income guarantee transferred to pension credit in October 2003.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
DWP Information directorate: Work and Pensions longitudinal study 100 percent. data.

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what date the £200 council tax rebate will be paid to pensioner households in England. [22582]

Mr. Timms: In most cases the £200 payment to help with council tax bills will be paid automatically with the winter fuel payment. Payments will be made over a number of weeks from early November. Eligible people who do not receive a winter fuel payment will need to claim. Claims must be received by 30 March 2006.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Zimbabwe

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the UN position is on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. [23238]

Hilary Benn: The spokesman of the UN, Secretary General Kofi Annan gave a briefing in New York on Monday 31 October, expressing the deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. The UN continues to receive reports that tens of thousands of people are still homeless and in need of assistance, months after the eviction campaign, called 'Operation Drive Out Rubbish' began in May 2005. DFID has already provided £1 million to UN agencies to provide emergency food, blankets, medical assistance and other

non-food items to the victims. The Government of Zimbabwe have now formally rejected offers of UN assistance to provide temporary shelter for these victims, stating publicly that there is no humanitarian crisis. The Secretary-General made a strong public appeal to the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that those who are out in the open, without shelter and without means of sustaining their livelihoods, are provided with humanitarian assistance in collaboration with the United Nations and the humanitarian community.

In terms of the broader humanitarian situation, despite compelling evidence of a very low grain harvest earlier this year, the Government of Zimbabwe similarly denies that the country needs international assistance to address food insecurity. Independent surveys indicate that between three and five million people will face food shortages in the coming months. The UN, through the World Food Programme, has secured agreement from the Government of Zimbabwe to distribute 300,000 tonnes of food to the most poor and vulnerable households. DFID has already pledged £10 million for this programme.

The UK fully supports the UN position on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. We strongly condemn the cynical and callous attitude of the Zimbabwe Government towards the well-being of its own citizens.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22575]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office is not currently undertaking any consultations. The Office has previously consulted on the size of the Scottish Parliament and Sunday working in Scotland. The details can be found in the consultations section of the Scotland Office website at:

www.scotlandoffice.gov.uk/our-communications.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [20999]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not directly recruit staff.

The Executive's current entry criteria for administrative grades require a minimum of two SCE standard or ordinary grades, including English and a subject that clearly indicates competency in figure work. Tests may sometimes be offered to give candidates the opportunity to display an equivalent level of numeracy and literacy. Where posts require a higher level of literacy or numeracy skills, the minimum criteria will be adjusted accordingly and the level of skill may be tested during the assessment process.

In the DCA, there is no formal requirement for all new recruits to be assessed in literacy and numeracy skills. General recruitment asks for administration experience or a minimum of five GCSEs for administrative grades or two A levels for executive grades; both minima require English. The DCA uses competence and job specification based recruitment which assesses candidates against the criteria in both the application form and at interview.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21120]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA); the Office does not employ staff directly.

The Scottish Executive recognises the importance of continuous support to staff, through training, to improve their skills and marketable qualifications and offers a range of training courses to do this. The need for training and improving skills more generally is identified as part of the staff reporting system within the Executive.

In the DCA, testing for literacy and numeracy is available for all staff on demand through their "Skills for Life" initiative. Staff can undertake written or computerised tests. The Department has undertaken to fund any training identified to improve individual literacy and/or numeracy levels resulting from the tests and has worked with local colleges and Union Learning representatives to address those needs.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23465]

Ms Buck: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency spent £4,900 on art in 2004–05. No other art has been purchased by the Department.

The works of art displayed within Ministers' offices have been provided on loan from the Government Art Collection (GAC). I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell) in respect of GAC expenditure in 2004–05 on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 896W.

Gloucester Parkway Station

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of whether the greater distance to Gloucester Parkway station from Cheltenham Spa station will result in greater use of car transport. [23756]

Ms Buck: All major scheme project bids including that of Gloucester Parkway are subject to detailed economic appraisal to determine the effects of the scheme and its value for money. This work is currently being undertaken.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed Gloucester Parkway station on Cheltenham Spa rail services. [23757]

Ms Buck: The impact of the proposed Gloucester Parkway on Cheltenham Spa rail services is being considered as part of the economic appraisal of the scheme currently being undertaken.

Pandemic Provisions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his Department's role in containing a pandemic. [22548]

Ms Buck: The Department for Health lead on the preparations for, and response, to any human pandemic outbreak. Appropriate action would be taken by the Department for Transport as required.

Ports

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport to how many ports the Transport Security Directorate has provided technical assistance in respect of compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code since its introduction. [24195]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has provided technical assistance to approximately 550 port facilities in the UK in approving some 380 port facility security plans in accordance with the requirements of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code.

Railways

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of First Great Western's proposals to reduce train journey times from London to Swansea to two hours. [23949]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* I am not aware of any such proposal.

Stansted Airport (Noise Pollution)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce noise pollution from Stansted airport; and if he will make a statement. [21810]

Ms Buck: The Government have a two-strand approach to tackling the problem. The first strand is to seek reductions of noise at source through international negotiation and agreement, implemented by national regulation. The second strand is to provide for controls on operational noise and the mitigation of its worst effects. Stansted is designated for the purposes of section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, making the Secretary of State directly responsible for those controls.

The 2004 annual noise exposure contours for Stansted were published in August 2005 and are on the Department's website at www.dft.gov.uk together with ERCD Report 0503 which provides data on the areas and populations within the contours and comparisons with earlier years. Between 1988 and 1998 areas and populations within the contours generally rose in line with movements but in 1999, despite the high traffic growth, the area within the 57 dBA Leq contour fell by 19 per cent. and this improvement has been maintained so far despite further significant growth in traffic.

Welsh Ports (Freight Handling)

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* value and *(b)* volume of freight passed through Welsh ports was in each year since 1997; and how many people have been employed (i) in total and (ii) to handle freight at Welsh ports in each year since 1997. [23567]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The available information is as follows:

Traffic passing through Welsh ports, 1997 to 2004

Thousand tonnes

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Barry	384	433	445	597	586	547	457	403
Cardiff	2,857	2,452	2,661	2,699	2,739	2,209	2,287	2,504
Fishguard	420	387	395	421	341	408	474	522
Holyhead	2,951	3,407	3,437	3,444	3,229	3,288	3,329	3,945
Milford Haven	34,518	28,783	32,187	33,768	33,792	34,543	32,737	38,452
Mostyn	320	326	359	310	309	871	944	656
Neath	525	506	474	466	504	369	383	416
Newport	2,974	2,628	2,532	2,673	2,980	3,111	2,790	3,448
Port Talbot	13,050	13,302	11,821	11,725	8,271	4,971	7,819	8,555
Swansea	3,674	3,137	1,650	1,014	1,261	1,069	848	721
Other ports	633	789	618	776	722	634	545	428
Total	62,307	56,150	56,578	57,892	54,734	52,020	52,613	60,051

Note

The figures include both traffic going into and coming out of Welsh ports.

Information on freight traffic passing through Welsh ports by value, and estimates of the number of people employed at Welsh ports is not available.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what period she recommends a movement ban for poultry in the event of an avian influenza outbreak. [22938]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Diseases of Poultry (England) Order 2003 outlines the restrictions that are put in place in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

An infected area extending for at least ten kilometres around the infected premises is declared. Restrictions imposed in this area include a ban on the movement of poultry for at least 30 days except under the authority of a licence issued by a veterinary inspector. In practice the movement ban would not be lifted until we are satisfied that disease is no longer present in the infected area.

We have draft legislation to implement a national or regional movement ban should the veterinary risk indicate that it is necessary. However, we would at an early stage implement a licensing regime under strict biosecurity rules to allow for essential and safe movements within the poultry industry. The length of the movement ban would be dependent on the nature of the risk.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the National Farmers Union about the possible impact of avian influenza on the farming industry; and if she will make a statement. [23132]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has met with a number of stake holders, including the National Farmers Union, to discuss issues such as avian influenza among other things.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chinese authorities regarding the animal health implications of recently reported outbreaks of avian influenza in central Hunan, Inner Mongolia and An Hui provinces. [23266]

Mr. Bradshaw: China, as a member of the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) has a responsibility to report all outbreaks of notifiable diseases to OIE. China has provided the OIE with details of the outbreak in Hunan and An Hui provinces. The OIE publish details of all outbreaks on its website. Officers from the Department monitor the situation and assess the risks of any outbreaks. As imports of birds and their products are already prohibited no further action was necessary in this case.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the presence of H5N1 avian influenza virus in Taiwan. [23918]

Mr. Bradshaw: We continue to closely monitor the spread of the H5N1 virus in South East Asia. Taiwan has not officially reported an outbreak of H5N1.

Birds

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of the suspension of bird fairs. [20947]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Commission Decision 2005/734/EC (as amended by Decision 2005/745/EC) required member states to prohibit gatherings of birds. These Decisions were made on 19 and 21 October 2005 respectively and required any necessary legislation to be put in place immediately

Domestic legislation implementing the Decisions came into force on 28 October after two meetings with key stakeholders. The Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 (2005 No. 2989) bans bird markets, fairs and other gatherings of birds. We have discussed with stakeholders and published the criteria on which some gatherings may continue under licence and subject to biosecurity controls.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many smuggled Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species-listed birds were seized by HM Customs and Excise entering the UK in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002 and *(d)* 2003; [23810]

(2) how many Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species-listed birds have arrived dead as recorded by HM Customs and Excise *(a)* in 2000, *(b)* in 2001, *(c)* in 2002, *(d)* in 2003, *(e)* in 2004 and *(f)* to date in 2005. [23811]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Details of seizures of all CITES listed species and specimens made by HM Customs and Excise from 1999–2003 are published on the UKCITES website at www.ukcites.gov.uk/news/tradestatistics.htm.

The seizure statistics include CITES birds that are smuggled and also those which are seized as a result of regulatory breaches.

There is no requirement for Customs to record details of any mortalities in any consignment of birds but the above website also includes such information where it has been recorded by the local officer.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will issue guidance to the public in respect of the appropriate action to be taken when dead birds are found in public areas. [20946]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Information for the public in the form of a full question and answer guidance has been issued on the DEFRA website (http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/qanda-wildbirds.htm) in respect of appropriate action to be taken.

In the event of an unusual die-off in wild birds (unusually high number of dead wild birds), the DEFRA Helpline (08459 33 55 77) should be contacted giving as much relevant information as possible to help DEFRA to decide if further action is necessary.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce legislation to prevent *(a)* the production of game birds for sport shooting and *(b)* the use of battery cages to produce game birds; and if she will make a statement. [18578]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans at present to introduce such provisions under the Animal Welfare Bill. Instead, this will seek to establish the general principle that people have a responsibility to ensure the welfare of animals they are responsible for. In relation to game birds, we propose to use the powers available under the Bill to reinforce the duty to ensure welfare, by formally regulating their keeping.

We are aware that there are concerns about the use of cages in the rearing of game birds. These concerns will be considered by Defra veterinarians to assist us in identifying problems that exist in this type of rearing system and the extent to which they can be addressed through regulations and a code.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether keepers of free range *(a)* chickens and *(b)* pheasants will be required to register under the new national register of poultry businesses; and if she will make a statement. [23533]

Mr. Bradshaw: The requirement is set out in the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005 (2005 No. 2989). All people who keep 50 or more poultry on commercial premises are required to keep written records of certain information. They will be required to notify this information to the Secretary of State by a date to be specified by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will then maintain a national poultry register.

The definition of poultry includes free range chickens and pheasants kept in captivity for the production of commercial products, for restocking supplies of game or for breeding.

Bovine TB

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle on farms in Wiltshire have been slaughtered following contraction of bovine tuberculosis in each of the past five years. [23598]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of TB infected cattle slaughtered on farms in Wiltshire over the last five years is given in the following table:

Year[1]	*Number of cattle slaughtered in Wiltshire*[2]
2004	1,044
2003	1,138
2002	1,0933
2001	2933
2000	484

[1] Data downloaded from State Veterinary Service database on 19 May 2005. All data provisional and subject to change as more data becomes available.

[2] TB Reactors plus Direct Contacts.

[3] In 2001, the TB testing and control programme was largely suspended due to the foot and mouth disease (FMD) cutbreak. When testing resumed in 2002, resources were concentrated on herds with overdue TB tests which would have had a longer period in which to contract the disease. Also the proportion of high risk herds tested immediately after the FMD outbreak was greater than that prior to the outbreak. As a result, data for 2001 and 2002 are not comparable with other years.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Department has made of whether badgers act as a reservoir for tuberculosis. [23628]

Mr. Bradshaw: The report of the review group chaired by Sir John Krebs, published in 1998, concluded "there is strong evidence for an association between TB in badgers and cattle".

The Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) was designed to gather evidence by testing the impact of two badger-culling strategies (proactive and reactive culling) on the incidence of bovine TB in cattle herds. The reactive element of the trial was suspended in November 2003 after interim analysis of data showed that reactive culling might lead to an increase in the incidence of cattle TB in reactive areas when compared to control (survey only) areas. However, the trial continues in proactive (and survey only) treatment areas.

The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISO), which oversees the trial, has undertaken to bring any significant results from the proactive element of the trial to Ministers' attention.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy that badger culls for the purposes of the control of bovine tuberculosis will take place only after rigorous scientific study. [23629]

Mr. Bradshaw: The strategic framework sets out the process for decision making on badger culling. This signals development of policy options for badger culling based on scientific evidence, analysis of practicality, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and humaneness. I expect to make an announcement on badger culling, one way or another, later in the autumn.

Cattle Imports (Brazil)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is towards beef exports from Brazil which are in transit. [23183]

Mr. Bradshaw: Consignments of meat which were produced on or before the outbreak (before 30 September) will be allowed to be imported providing they meet the import rules. If produced after 30 September, the consignment will be refused. Defra have been advised by the European Commission that where consignments are mixed, the part of the consignment produced from animals slaughtered before 30 September may be admitted.

Environment Council

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the meeting of the EU Environment Council in Luxembourg on 17 October. [20466]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the written Ministerial Statement on the outcome of the Council made on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 23–24WS in line with the new procedures. A copy of the Statement is attached.

Farm Waste

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice she has given to farmers about the disposal of waste from farms; and if she will make a statement. [23133]

Mr. Bradshaw: We sent a summary of the consultation paper on the draft "Agricultural Waste Regulations" to 162,000 farmers and growers in England and Wales. The summary advised farmers of the five basic options available to them for the disposal of their waste when the regulations come into force.

We intend to issue guidance to accompany the final regulations. The Environment Agency is also developing practical guidance on a range of issues on which farmers and growers may seek advice when the regulations come into force (eg the storage of waste and farm dumps). This guidance is being developed in consultation with the Agricultural Waste Stakeholders' Forum. The agency and members of the forum organised a farmer focus meeting on 8 September 2005 at Holme Lacy College to gauge the level of farmers' understanding of the forthcoming waste management controls, to help shape the guidance being developed and to ensure its effectiveness.

Fishing No-take Zones

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to change the number of fishing no-take zones. [22870]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* A recent Defra publication, 'Charting a new course' explains how we intend to develop with stakeholders work on protected areas to increase fish stocks. We will develop criteria for the selection of Marine Protected Areas and then use those criteria to contribute to the development of an integrated approach to the selection of multi purpose MPAs, including for wider nature conservation. We are also considering how many additional protected areas might be needed to protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity and fulfil the international commitments we have made in this area.

In relation to fisheries protected areas, we would need to consider the nature and degree of protection required within an identified area for a specific stock or stocks. Current scientific advice is, however, that a total ban on fishing within a defined area (a no take zone) may not inevitably benefit stocks, particularly mobile species such as cod and that we might better achieve our objectives through seasonal or gear restrictions rather than total closure.

In parallel the Government are committed to a Marine Bill to introduce a new framework based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs, to obtain best value from different uses of our valuable marine resources by maintaining and protecting the ecosystems on which they depend.

Flood Prevention (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to improve flood prevention measures in Kent.[19803]

Mr. Morley: Defra has policy responsibility for flood risk management in England. The Environment Agency is the principal authority responsible for operational flood risk management. Defra funds most of the agency's flood related work and grant aids individual projects undertaken by local authorities and internal drainage boards.

More than three hundred kilometres of coastal and tidal flood defences are maintained by the Environment Agency around the Kent coastline. The agency's future capital programme envisages substantial investment in the county of Kent for projects in the next three to five years. Current projects include £9.8 million spend this year on a sea defence project at High Knocke to Dymchurch and smaller flood alleviation schemes in East Peckham, Aylesford, Jury's gap and the Romney and Stour Marshlands.

The agency is developing the Medway Estuary and Swale flood risk management plan, the North Kent shoreline management plan, Thames Estuary 2100 strategy, and the Stour and North Kent rivers catchment flood management plans. These high level planning documents will inform and influence planning and investment for the next one hundred years.

The agency also provides advice (typically on ninety applications per month in Kent) to planning authorities to help with the Government's aim of avoiding inappropriate development in areas of flood risk.

In addition to the Environment Agency's work, Tonbridge and Mailing borough council is currently promoting the East Peckham flood defence scheme with Defra grant aid at an estimated cost of some £928,000.

GM Crops

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will seek to move control over genetically modified crops from the EU back to individual member states; and if she will make a statement. [23922]

Mr. Morley: The Government have no plans to seek to change the current regulatory regime which exists at EU level to govern the deliberate release into the environment and the placing on the market of genetically modified organisms.

Decisions as to what can be consumed or grown in the EU as a whole have been taken by member states collectively under a regime of safety testing, monitoring and control which was set up in 1990, and has been strengthened significantly since.

Household Waste

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion of household waste which is recycled. [22732]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government set each local authority a statutory target for recycling and composting for 2003–04 and 2005–06 and is now consulting on proposals for targets for 2007–08. Provisional figures show more than a fifth (approaching 23 percent.) of household waste in England was recycled, in 2004–05.

To support the attainment of these targets, Defra introduced the Household Waste Recycling Act in 2003 which provides that English waste collection authorities shall ensure, except in certain circumstances, that by the end of 2010 they collect at least two recyclable materials from doorsteps separate from the remainder of the waste. About two thirds of households in England now receive a kerbside collection of recyclable materials.

In the spending review 2004 the Government announced an increase in the environmental, protective and cultural services block of £888 million over 2004–05, by 2007–08 and over the three-year period to 2005–06, authorities are also benefiting from a total of £294 million invested through the waste minimisation and recycling fund. Its successor, the waste performance and efficiency grant, will run in parallel for the first year and provide a further £260 million over the three years to 2007–08.

Since 2002, local authorities have also been assisted by targeted support and advice available through the waste and resources action programme and Defra's waste implementation programme—which will continue to provide targeted assistance to authorities for a further two years and an announcement of its new programme will be made in December 2005.

Illegal Logging

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she plans to take against timber merchants in the UK that are found to be stockpiling illegally logged timber. [22215]

Mr. Morley: Under the Forestry Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) regulation agreed at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 October, it will be possible to prohibit entry into the EU of illegal timber products from countries that enter into Partnership Agreements with the EU for the first time. The UK will have the authority to impose penalties on timber importers who infringe this regulation. However, there is no legal prohibition on the possession of illegally logged timber in the UK per se.

FLEGT will also not address timber that comes from non partner countries that may be believed to be illegal. The Proceeds of Crime Act (2002) and EC legislation dealing with Money Laundering (including Directive 2001/97/EC) can be used to pursue those trading in illegal timber, but this depends on proving that a crime has been committed and that there is mutual criminality in both the source and receiving countries.

Kyoto Protocols

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action the Government are planning to take on greenhouse gas emissions to ensure compliance with the Kyoto protocol. [22729]

Mr. Morley: We remain on course comfortably to achieve the UK's Kyoto target of a 12.5 percent. reduction in greenhouse gas emissions during the first commitment period, 2008–12. Provisional 2004 figures released in March show that emissions of the basket of six greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide (CO_2) methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), the hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6)) were about 12 ½ percent. below the base year, and that the policies already in place would achieve significant further reductions to ensure compliance. We are currently reviewing UK climate change programme and are looking at how existing policies are performing and the range of policies that might be put in place in future, in order to assess the policies needed to put us back on track towards our much more ambitious domestic goal of a 20 percent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010. Achieving this would correspond to a reduction of well over 20 percent. in the Kyoto basket.

Recycling (Plastics)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures the Government are taking *(a)* to promote and *(b)* to facilitate the recycling of plastic household products made from (i) single polymers and (ii) mixed polymers. [22414]

Mr. Bradshaw: Through the waste and resources action programme (WRAP), the Government are spending £20 million with local authorities to raise awareness of recycling in their own communities, and £10 million on a national "recycle now" campaign. Information about plastic recycling can be found on the campaign website www.recyclenow.com

WRAP have developed a number of programs to promote plastic bottle recycling from households and have identified end markets for mixed "dirty" plastic waste which will help to drive increased recycling.

The management of plastic packaging waste is already addressed in the UK through the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended). These regulations require packaging producers to recycle 22.5 percent. of all plastic packaging entering the UK waste stream by 31 December 2008. Last year the UK recycled 19 percent. up from 7 percent. in 1997.

I understand that RECOUP (recycling of used plastic) and the BPF (British Plastic Federation) have recently been promoting and facilitating the collection and recycling of single polymers including plastic bottles and expanded polystyrene from the household waste stream. The industry is currently examining possible applications for mixed polymers, which may include concrete type products.

The Government are in the process of implementing the EU waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) directive, which will require the treatment and recycling to target levels of all separately collected WEEE, including small, plastic-rich equipment.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will make it a requirement for all plastic household products to be marked according to a standard code indicating the type of polymer used in their manufacture to enable consumers to identify and sort the main types of plastic for recycling purposes. [22415]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have no plans to make the marking of plastic household products mandatory.

In relation to packaging, however, the European Commission Decision 97/129/EC provides for numbering and abbreviations to identify the different packaging materials, including plastics. Whilst the marking system is voluntary, we would encourage manufacturers to use the markings where possible to aid the process of sorting and recycling of plastic packaging waste.

Sheep Movements

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the recent change in the rules that apply to the recording of sheep movements; and whether she *(a)* sought and *(b)* received the approval of the National Farmers Union for the changes. [24692]

Mr. Bradshaw: The recent changes to the way in which sheep and goat movements are reported were introduced to ensure that our rules were equivalent in effect to EU rules on the identification and movement of sheep. On this basis we secured a temporary derogation from the need to double tag sheep and goats. This expires in April 2006. Only if sheep and goat farmers are found to comply with these rules is the derogation likely to be extended.

The National Farmers Union was fully consulted on the proposed changes and agreed with them. They agreed to the issue of the explanatory letter, which included their logo, to sheep and goat keepers in England on 24 October.

Slug Pellets

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the recommended concentration of Bixtrex animal deterrent is in slug pellets sold in the UK; what the concentration of such deterrent is in Duff Slugoids slug pellets as sold in the UK; and what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the content of such deterrent in those pellets. [21400]

Mr. Morley: The concentration of the animal deterrent Bitrex in slug pellet products sold in the UK varies, depending on the product concerned. For all these products, including Doff Slugoids, the range is 100–300mg for each 100g of product.

All pesticide products sold in the UK are subject to an approval. The regulatory authority is the Pesticide Safety Directorate (PSD). Approvals, such as that held by Doff Slugoids, are issued on the basis of PSD's assessment of experimental safety and efficacy data. This assessment includes an evaluation of the need for a deterrent in the product under consideration and at what level.

Southern Water Services Ltd.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons Southern Water Services Limited have reported customer billing inconsistencies to the Serious Fraud Office; what assessment she has made of the implications for customers; and if she will make a statement. [22417]

Mr. Morley: Southern Water Services Limited reported irregularities in the handling and reporting of customer inquiries and complaints to the Office of Water Services and to the Serious Fraud Office.

Southern Water has given the Office of Water Services an assurance that customers who have been disadvantaged will be reimbursed. The Office of Water Services will conduct an investigation and report on its conclusions in due course.

The company has asked the Serious Fraud Office whether or not this is a suitable matter for it to investigate. It is for the Serious Fraud Office to decide whether to investigate further.

Warm Front Scheme

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in *(a)* Hartlepool constituency and *(b)* the Tees Valley sub-region have received assistance under the Warm Front Scheme in each year since the scheme began. [23289]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in Hartlepool constituency are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000–01	563
2001–02	756
2002–03	819
2003–04	1,096
2004–05	774
Total	4,008

During the same period, the number of households assisted in the Tees Valley sub-region (that is including the areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees) are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000–01	3,095
2001–02	8,511
2002–03	7,427
2003–04	5,186
2004–05	4,318
Total	28,537

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many residents in the Kettering constituency were *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* received grants under the Warm Front Scheme in each of the last five years. [24193]

Mr. Morley: Information on the exact number of residents in Kettering eligible for Warm Front is not available. However, on the basis of the statistical modelling used by the Warm Front Scheme Manager it is estimated that around 11,000 households in Kettering could currently be eligible for assistance from the Scheme.

Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in Kettering are as follows:

	Number of households assisted
2000-01	157
2001-02	329
2002-03	337
2003-04	278
2004-05	241
Total	1,342

Waste Management

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to align local authorities' waste collection targets with those set for packaging manufacturers. [20974]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 26 October I launched a consultation on options for local authority recycling and composting targets for household waste in 2007–08. This consultation is due to end on Friday 20 January, 2005.

The current review of waste strategy 2000 is considering a longer term vision, looking more broadly at the future direction of local authorities, wider waste streams and the role of statutory targets. The review is taking into account the fact that there are already a number of policy levers designed to drive the management of waste up the hierarchy such as the landfill allowance trading scheme, the landfill tax escalator as well as the obligations imposed on the producers of waste, including in relation to the recycling of packaging materials and of waste electrical and electronic equipment.

Water Desalination Plants

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many water desalination plants are *(a)* in operation, *(b)* under construction and *(c)* planned, broken down by location; and what company is involved in each case. [23446]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Water companies' proposals for resource developments, including proposed desalination plants, in fulfilment of their duties to maintain adequate supplies of water are set out in the 25 year water resources plans they prepared in 2004. The Environment Agency has advised Ministers about the appropriateness of these proposals and other measures to ensure security of supply, in its report "Maintaining water supply", which was published in July 2004.

No water company yet has a desalination plant in operation though South East Water has one under construction at Newhaven and is testing a pilot plant at this site.

Thames Water is presently seeking planning permission for a major desalination plant at Beckton in the Thames estuary. Thames Water's water resources plan identifies a second plant in the 2020s. Folkestone and Dover Water and Southern Water also propose the development of desalination plants in the 2020s. The location of these proposed plants will be a matter for the companies concerned to determine.

TREASURY

Banks (Branch Closures)

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce legislation to oblige banks *(a)* to consult customers and local residents and *(b)* to offer support and adequate alternative banking arrangements, in the event of branch closures in small rural communities; and if he will make a statement. [22198]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government have no plans to introduce legislation in this area. However, all of the main high street banks and building societies are signed up to the Banking Code, which has recently been subject to an independent review. Through the Banking Code there is now an obligation for subscribers to:

give customers extended notice of branch closure if the road distance of the nearest alternative branch is more than one mile in urban areas or more than four miles in rural areas;

explain how they continue to provide services after the branch has been closed in a way that is specific to local provision; and,

give notice of any substantial reduction in opening hours.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of bank branch closures on social exclusion in small rural communities, with particular reference to *(a)* local residents and *(b)* small local businesses. [22199]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Work is under way through the Financial Inclusion Taskforce to explore how the financially excluded individuals access their cash and transmit money. Among other things, this work will identity the mechanisms for accessing banking services that are used by the financially excluded. The results of this work are due next year.

In addition, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs works closely with other Departments to ensure that when developing and implementing policy they consider the needs of rural residents, and particularly the most disadvantaged.

Debt Counselling

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* discussions he has had with and *(b)* representations he has received from debt counselling services since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [24298]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department for Trade and Industry coordinates the Government's work on consumer credit and tackling over-indebtedness. Ministers in that Department have engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders on this issue.

Employment Figures

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women aged over 65 years (i) started a job with a new employer, (ii) were employees and (iii) were employed in 2004. [23686]

John Healey: The Information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Vera Baird, dated 2 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number of people over 65 years of age who have changed jobs in 2004. (23686)

The attached table provides the available information showing the number of people aged 65 and over, who are employees, were in employment 12 months ago and who had changed jobs one or more times within the last 12 months.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

People aged 65 and over who changed job in the last 12 months—United Kingdom

Thousand

Three months ending May 2005	Total	Male	Female
All employees aged 65 and over	362	192	170
of which:			
In employment[1] 12 months ago	325	177	148
of which:			
Changed jobs in past year[2,3]	8	7	1

[1] Includes both employees and the self employed.
[2] Includes people who changed jobs more than once in past year.
[3] Only includes people who had a change of employer.
Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part Gateway Reviews for these projects. [23493]

John Healey: Eight IT projects have been or are about to be delivered between 2002 and 2005. A Gateway Review is conducted on a confidential basis for the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and is not generally made public. To disclose Gateway Review Reports or RAG status information would be likely to prejudice both the ability of reviewers to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and economy with which other Government Departments exercise their functions and also the formulation and development of Government policy.

Mortgages

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what provisions against loan losses the Financial Services Authority and its predecessor bodies have required mortgage lenders to make on their mortgage portfolios since 1998; and when guidance has been issued over the last three years. [24318]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) is operationally independent of the Government and is responsible for determining what provisions against loan losses it has required mortgage lenders to make on their mortgage portfolios since 1998, and when it has issued guidance on this over the last three years. The FSA shall be writing to the hon. Member shortly about these issues.

Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of employer contributions to public sector final salary pension schemes in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [23392]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested is not available.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department is conducting exercises aimed at quantifying the level of official error in child and working tax credits. [18643]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on official error is collated by reference to the amount of relief given. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on the 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 497W, which provides an update on the amount of official error relief given.

Details on accuracy of processing and calculating awards in 2004–05 were published in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General 2004–05, which forms part of the 2004–05 Inland report accounts. This shows an accuracy level of 96.5 per cent. in 2004–05.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy that staff at HM Revenue and Customs should take a decision on which tax credit payments are recoverable under code of practice 26 before recovery action on tax credits is initiated; and if he will make a statement. [19294]

Dawn Primarolo: Code of practice 26, 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?', sets out HMRC's policy on dealing with overpayments. I refer also to the reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Mudie) on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 368W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on suspending the recovery of tax credit overpayments in disputed cases; and if he will make a statement. [19295]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Mudie), of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 368W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time taken was for a caller to be answered on the MPs' tax credit hotline in each month since April 2003. [19407]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Call management and monitoring technology were only introduced to the MP hotline number on 7 October 2005.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps are being taken to improve the operation of the tax credit system; [20002]

(2) pursuant to the Written Statement from the Paymaster General of 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, columns 22–3WS on tax credit over-payments, what progress has been made on the implementation of the six measures to improve the tax credits system. [24209]

Dawn Primarolo: In my Statement to the House on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 22WS, I outlined a six point recovery plan to improve the administration of tax credits. I reported on the progress that has been made on these measures at a hearing of the Treasury sub-Committee on 26 October.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the automated response telling hon. Members and their staff that all the tax credit advisers at the MPs' tax credit hotline are busy was introduced; and if he will make it his policy to increase the number of staff available to serve the hotline. [21148]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* New telephony equipment was introduced to the MP hotline on 7 October 2005.

The level of staffing on helplines is kept under review.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact on staff *(a)* time and *(b)* requirement of the decision to intervene manually in the case of a tax credit overpayment where the automatic recovery procedure has been initiated. [24141]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs currently estimates that the manual suspension of recovery and subsequent necessary administrative processes will add 40 minutes to the processing of a disputed overpayment case.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the likely average time between an automatic recovery procedure being initiated in a case of overpaid tax credits and the manual intervention by officials to stop that procedure. [24147]

Dawn Primarolo: Manual intervention to stop an automatic recovery procedure will normally take place within five working days of Tax Credit Office receiving a dispute, unless the case can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion before that time.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in receipt of tax credits and who are most at risk of an overpayment have been contacted by HM Revenue and Customs to ensure that their stated circumstances and incomes are up to date. [17646]

Dawn Primarolo: As agreed with HM Revenue and Customs and announced in my statement of 26 May 2005, HMRC is currently testing the effectiveness of different methods of encouraging families to keep them informed of changes in their circumstances.

HMRC recently completed a programme of outward bound telephone calls to try and encourage people to return their renewal forms before the deadline date of 30 September 2005.

Anne Milton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the performance target is for the commencement of payment of working tax credit once an application has been received; [17683]

(2) what percentage of working tax credit applications are being processed within the target time. [17684]

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time was between a tax credit application being made and the claimant receiving the first payment in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [19404]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has Service Delivery Agreement targets for deciding tax credits claims, renewals and changes of circumstance within five days and 30 days. Targets and the performance against these targets in 2003–04 are published in the former Inland Revenue's annual report for 2003–04. 2004–05 targets and indicative results of performance are published in spring report for 2004–05 and the results, together with targets for 2005–06 will be reported in the Department's annual report in due course. These reports are available on the HMRC website, www.hmrc.gov.uk

There are no performance targets for commencement of tax credit payments. Payments are made automatically on the first scheduled payment date after the claim is decided.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many car owners paid *(a)* the full rate of vehicle excise duty and *(b)* the reduced rate for low carbon emission vehicles in each of the last 10 years. [23338]

John Healey: Before 1999 all cars paid a single flat rate of Vehicle Excise Duty. In 1999, the Government introduced a new VED scheme based on two classes of engine capacity. In 2001, the Government introduced a graduated carbon emission based VED scheme—applicable only to cars registered after that date—to reflect environmental impacts.

Total number of vehicles in the Private and Light Goods vehicle class

	Number
2000	27,028,100
2001	26,240,404
2002	25,781,936
2003	25,126,172
2004	24,405,548

Reduced rate VED[1] (applicable to cars registered before 1 March 2001)

Number of vehicles paying the standard rate	*Number of vehicles paying a reduced rate*
10,848,852	6,733,635
11,711,478	7,482,636
12,744,272	8,399,582
19,242,552	3,816,177
20,559,122	3,846,426
22,212,057	1,762,879

[1] The reduced rate was introduced in 1999 for cars with an engine capacity of 1100cc or less. This was extended to cars up to 1200cc in 2003 and further extended to cars below 1550 cc in 2002.

Graduated VED (applicable to cars registered on or after 1 March 2001)

	Graduated VED CO2 based band					
	Band A[1]	*Band B[2]*	*Band C[3]*	*Band D[4]*	*Band E[5]*	*Band F[6]*
2004	374	205,185	2,625,255	2,188,537	1,753,238	2,673,024
2003	358	129,117	1,873,400	1,645,896	1,328,499	2,069,020
2002	—	59,883	1,147,618	1,129,638	889,936	1,411,007
2001	—	—	492,133	483,888	441,597	649,825

[1] Introduced in 2003 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions up to 100 g/km.
[2] Introduced in 2002 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions up to 120 g/km. From 2003 this band covered cars with CO_2 emissions between 101 and 120 g/km.
[3] Introduced in 2001 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions up to 150 g/km. From 2002 this band covered cars with CO_2 emissions between 121 and 150 g/km.
[4] Introduced in 2001 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions between 151 and 165 g/km.
[5] Introduced in 2001 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions between 166 and 185 g/km.
[6] Introduced in 2001 for cars registered since March 2001 with CO_2 emissions over 185 g/km.

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on the pattern of purchasing of new motor cars of the introduction of graduated vehicle excise duty in 2001; and whether a higher proportion of low emission cars has been sold. [23661]

John Healey: Since the introduction of the reformed VED system, graduated according to CO_2 emissions, the percentage of new cars sold in VED band B has risen from 0.1 per cent. in 2000 to 3.2 per cent. in 2004. The percentage of cars in new car sales in VED band C has increased from just under 20 per cent. to just over 30 per cent. during the same period.

Alongside the EU-wide voluntary agreements on average new car fuel efficiency, and the new CO_2 -based company car tax regime introduced in 2002, the introduction in 2001 of the graduated Vehicle Excise Duty scheme has had a part to play in the average fuel efficiency of new cars sold in the UK improving by some 10 per cent. since 1995.

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment has been in Coventry, South in each of the last five years. [23240]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 2 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment. (23240)

Table 1, attached, shows the total numbers of unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 who were resident in the Coventry, South parliamentary constituency. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 1997 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2, attached, shows the annual average number of JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Coventry, South constituency for 1997 to 2004.

The data are published on the ONS Nomis(r) website: www.nomisweb.co.uk.

Table 1: Numbers of unemployed, aged 16 to 24, resident in the Coventry, South constituency

12 months ending	*Thousand Coventry, South*
February 1998	1
February 1999	1
February 2000	1
February 2001	1
February 2002	1
February 2003	1
February 2004	1
March 2005	1

Note:
The estimates for local areas are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year-to-year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants, aged 18 to 24, resident in the Coventry, South constituency

Annual averages	*Coventry, South*
1997	770
1998	670
1999	545
2000	470
2001	470
2002	470
2003	540
2004	475

Note:
Computerised claims only. Data rounded to nearest five for disclosure control.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

PRIME MINISTER

Heads of State Meeting (Hampton Court)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Informal Meeting of Heads of State at Hampton Court Palace on 27 October. [18681]

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals he put to the informal EU Leadership Summit in Hampton Court on *(a)* securing European energy security, *(b)* enhancing innovation in science and technology in the European Union and *(c)* mitigation of climate change impacts. [23550]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the written ministerial statement that I made to the House on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 29–32WS.

President of China (State Visit)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Prime Minister if he will use the forthcoming State Visit of China's President *(a)* to encourage the President to meet the Dalai Lama and *(b)* to express the UK's concern over the Chinese occupation of Tibet. [24192]

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if he will raise the issue of human rights in Tibet during the forthcoming visit of the President of China; [24202]

(2) if he will offer to facilitate a meeting between the Dalai Lama and the President of China. [24203]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 674W.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission whether the Parliamentary Estate will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23725]

Nick Harvey: The Parliamentary Estate has been participating in the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Energy Efficiency programme since 2004. The Parliamentary Estate have considered participating in the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management five-step process and intends to sign up to it in 2006.

Director of Parliamentary Communications

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission with how many hon. Members the Director of Parliamentary Communications *(a)* has held meetings and *(b)* has not held a meeting following a request for such a meeting. [24306]

Nick Harvey: Records of such requests are not held, but the Director and his administrative team do not recall any occasions when a Member has requested a meeting and one has not been arranged.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Meg Hillier: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units expected to be built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund in the London Region in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08 are (i) mixed funded social rented housing, (ii) temporary social rented housing, (iii) homebuy general market purchase, (iv) homebuy general new build, (v) mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, (vi) miscellaneous works to RSL stock, (vii) reimprovements to rented RSL stock, (viii) works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, (ix) works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, (x) intermediate rent for key workers, (xi) homebuy market purchase for key workers, (xii) homebuy new build for key workers, (xiii) mixed funded sale for key workers, (xiv) right to acquire, (xv) voluntary purchase grant, (xvi) starter home initiative, (xvii) do-it-yourself shared ownership, (xviii) temporary intermediate and (xix) market rented housing; and how much will be spent on each category in each year. [20462]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show the latest estimated completions and expenditure in the London region for 2005–06 through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, for categories from (i) to (xix). Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Estimated completions in London region in 2005–06

		Units
i	Mixed Funded Social Rent	3,842
ii	Temporary Social Rent	396
iii	Homebuy Market Purchase	459
iv	Homebuy New Build	33
v	Mixed Funded for Sale	1,288
vi	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	2,166
vii	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	86
viii	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	124
ix	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0
x	Intermediate rent for key workers	250
xi	Homebuy market purchase for key workers	2,231
xii	Homebuy new build for key workers	0
xiii	Mixed funded sale for key workers	482
xiv	Right to Acquire	27
xv	Voluntary Purchase Grant	7
xvi	Starter Home Initiative	4
xvii	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0
xviii	Temporary intermediate	0
xix	Market rent housing	0

Estimated expenditure in London region in 2005–06

		£ million
i	Mixed Funded Social Rent	318.663
ii	Temporary Social Rent	10.175
iii	Homebuy Market Purchase	23.098
iv	Homebuy New Build	0.802
v	Mixed Funded for Sale	52.475
vi	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	6.042
vii	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	3.011
viii	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	2.458
ix	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0.000
x	Intermediate rent for key workers	11.832
xi	Homebuy market purchase for key workers	131.673
xii	Homebuy new build for key workers	0.000
xiii	Mixed funded sale for key workers	39.357

Estimated expenditure in London region in 2005–06

		£ million
xiv	Right to Acquire	0.420
xv	Voluntary Purchase Grant	0.112
xvi	Starter Home Initiative	0.241
xvii	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0.000
xviii	Temporary intermediate	0.000
xix	Market rent housing	0.000

Note:
Categories vi,vii,viii and ix are not usually counted as completions, and figures are provided for illustrative purposes.
Source:
Housing Corporation Information Management System as at 12 October 2005.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The London Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £2,280 million for the two years a total of £1,684 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's bidding process.

In August 2005 the Housing Corporation launched the bidding round for the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). This invited both registered social landlords and non-registered bodies to apply for funds to develop affordable housing based on priorities set by the Regional Housing Boards. The outcome of this bidding round will not be known until early in 2006.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units expected to be built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme in the Yorkshire and Humber Region in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, *(c)* 2007–08 are (i) mixed funded social rented housing, (ii) temporary social rented housing, (iii) homebuy general market purchase, (iv) homebuy general new build, (v) mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, (vi) miscellaneous works to registered social landlord stock (RSL), (vii) reimprovements to rented RSL stock, (viii) works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, (ix) works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, (x) right to acquire, (xi) voluntary purchase grant, (xii) do-it-yourself shared ownership and (xiii) temporary intermediate and market rent housing; and how much will be spent on each category in each year. [20659]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show the latest estimated completions and expenditure in the Yorkshire and Humber region for 2005–06 through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, for categories from (i) to (xiii). Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Estimated completions in Yorkshire and Humber region in 2005–06

		Units
i	Mixed Funded Social Rent	963
ii	Temporary Social Rent	53
iii	Homebuy Market Purchase	58
iv	Homebuy New Build	0
v	Mixed Funded for Sale	169
vi	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	172
vii	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	102
viii	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	3
ix	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0
x	Right to Acquire	42
xi	Voluntary Purchase Grant	47
xii	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0
xiii	Temporary intermediate & Market rent housing	0

Estimated expenditure in Yorkshire and Humber region in 2005–06

		£ million
i	Mixed Funded Social Rent	48.710
ii	Temporary Social Rent	1.333
iii	Homebuy Market Purchase	1.651
iv	Homebuy New Build	0.000
v	Mixed Funded for Sale	3.567
vi	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	0.267
vii	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	3.209
viii	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	0.397
ix	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for Sale	0.000
x	Right to Acquire	0.382
xi	Voluntary Purchase Grant	0.455
xii	Do-it-yourself-shared Ownership	0.000
xiii	Temporary intermediate & Market rent housing	0.000

Note:
Categories vi,vii,viii and ix are not usually counted as completions, and figures are provided for illustrative purposes.
Source:
Housing Corporation Information Management System as at 12 October 2005.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £301 million for the two years a total of £138 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's bidding process.

In August 2005 the Housing Corporation launched the bidding round for the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). This invited both registered social landlords and non-registered bodies to apply for funds to develop affordable housing based on priorities set by the Regional Housing Boards. The outcome of this bidding round will not be known until early in 2006.

Climate Change (Developer Guidance)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance on climate change for developers have been issued by his Department. [20310]

Yvette Cooper: The briefs and guides on climate change issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are listed as follows:

The Planning Response to Climate Change—Advice on Better Practice (September 2004)

The Approved Documents to part L of the Building Regulations.

Departmental Finance

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the money spent by his office through the Sustainable Communities Directorate has been spent *(a)* in the North West and *(b)* in the South East. [20749]

Yvette Cooper: Estimated spend in the North West and South East regions through the Sustainable Communities Directorate in 2004–05 is as follows:

Spend in £ million

Programme	*North West*	*South East*
Housing Corporation	116.6	326.5
Housing Market Renewal Fund	95.5	—
Other Growth Areas	—	15.5
Black and Minority Ethnic RSLs	9.0	—
Safer Communities Housing Fund	1.3	2.3
Starter Home Initiative	—	2.2
Other Programmes	0.3	0.6
Total	222.7	347.1

Note:
1. This assessment of expenditure by regions was based on total expenditure plans in Dec 2004 and is consistent with the latest edition of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses.
2. Differing methods of allocating or apportioning spend between regions have been used for the programmes. In each case the most appropriate method was used for the programme in question.

Fire and Rescue Service

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect of the Working Time Directive on retained staff within the fire and rescue service; and if he will make a statement. [24106]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No specific assessment has been made by this Office of the effect of the Working Time Directive on Retained Duty System (RDS) staff within the Fire and Rescue Service. Under the current Working Time Regulations RDS firefighters can work more than 48 hours as long as they have signed a waiver for their primary employer as well as the fire and rescue service confirming they wish to opt out of the limit on working hours.

Information Security

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the compliance of local authorities with BS7799 on information security management; and if he will make a statement. [22586]

Mr. Woolas: All local authorities in England, as part of the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) process are required to report their compliance with the British Standard on Information Security Standard BS 7799. The IEG process is subject to independent verification by the Audit Commission or the local authority's own independent external auditor.

To date there have been four completed IEG rounds, the latest IEG4 reported that 85 per cent. of council's assessed themselves as being either compliant or actively implementing BS 7799.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23406]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Development and Training pages of the ODPM intranet include one called Skills for Life which provides information and web links to a variety of resources.

The Skills for Life page has a link to the Department for Education and Skills website, which promotes an online literacy and numeracy check and gives practice versions of the National Test and supporting information. Further information and resources include information and a link to LearnDirect.

All new entrants receive a personal induction chat at which attention is drawn to the Skills for Life strategy and a self-test and further information contained in their personal induction pack. In addition, Skills for Life is listed as an induction module and contacts for further advice are given, including a local supplier.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning permission applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in Coventry, South since 1997. [23239]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. My hon. Friend may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Rural Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses built in rural settlement according to the rural exceptions policy have been built in each of the last five years. [22027]

Yvette Cooper: The requested information is currently available for the three financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Affordable housing delivered through the planning system on rural exception sites in England

	Number
2001–02	694
2002–03	391
2003–04	262

DEFENCE

Aldermaston

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the allocated expenditure on the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston *(a)* was in 2004–05 and *(b)* is in 2005–06. [21700]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 15W, to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) and my hon. Friend the Member for Islington North (Jeremy Corbyn).

Armed Forces Deployment

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of armed forces personnel serving in Iraq are *(a)* Welsh, *(b)* English, *(c)* Scottish, *(d)* Irish and *(e)* foreign nationals. [19301]

Mr. Touhig: Information on the nationality of all service personnel serving in Iraq is not held centrally.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of *(a)* the British armed forces and *(b)* British armed forces who have served in Iraq are (i) Irish and (ii) foreign nationals. [19361]

Mr. Touhig: The percentage of UK armed forces who are Irish or Foreign nationals is set out in the following table:

Percentage

Service	*Irish*	*Foreign*
Naval Service	0.2	1.1
Army	0.2	5.8
Royal Air Force	0.1	0.3

Naval Service figures are for UK Regular Forces including Nursing Services, Full Time Reserve Service and activated reservists. Army and RAF data are for UK Regular Forces (trained and untrained), including Nursing Services and excluding Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.

Information on the nationality of all the service personnel who have ever served in Iraq is not held centrally.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21921]

Mr. Touhig: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from members of parliament, members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers' correspondence is published on an annual basis. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

The Ministry of Defence plans to introduce a new intranet-based toolkit to better track and handle all correspondence in 2006. This should enable us to better monitor our performance and help early identification of problems and delays.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22564]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence is currently undertaking one formal consultation the title of which is the "Met Office Proposal for Changes to its Civil Centre Network". It is being carried out by the Met Office, which is a Trading Fund of the Ministry of Defence.

The consultation period began on 5 July 2005 and the original deadline for responses was 20 October 2005. However, as a result of the comments received during the consultation period, and based on further analysis and research undertaken by the Met Office with its commercial customers (particularly in respect of potential impact on revenue), I have agreed that the Met Office should further develop an additional option. As a result, a consultation document ("Met Office Proposals for changes to its civil centre network—Consideration of further option") with further details of this new proposed option was issued on 24 October and the consultation period has been extended until 15 November to allow comments on it.

Copies of both consultation documents are available on the Met Office website at http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2005/consultation.pdf and http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2005/CivilCentreConsultationNewOption251005.pdf respectively.

Departmental Property

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what property his Department owns in the Kettering constituency. [23188]

Mr. Touhig: There are two defence-related properties located within the Kettering constituency: a fuel depot and an Air Training Corps (ATC) establishment in Northampton Road, Kettering, which is the property of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reason the signing of the contract to begin future aircraft carrier construction has been postponed; and on what date he expects it to be signed; [21703]

(2) whether he expects that the first of the future aircraft carriers will meet its projected in-service date of 2012; [21704]

(3) what his latest estimate is of the cost of constructing each future aircraft carrier. [21705]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The future aircraft carrier (CVF) project is in its assessment phase, the aim of which is to balance the key parameters of performance, time, cost and risk.

As with all projects in the assessment phase, in-service dates (ISDs) are not fixed until the main investment decision. Estimated costs are being constantly refined and it will not be bounded until the main investment decision. The decision on construction strategy and associated contracts will form part of our main investment decision.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely impact of France joining the UK future aircraft carrier project. [21706]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Given that both we and France are embarking on major, complex carrier procurement projects, we are examining areas of mutual benefit and opportunities to deliver economies. It is for industry to put forward proposals which will be judged on their merits and in light of national policies. It has been agreed with France that for co-operation to work, it must deliver cost savings and must do so without delaying UK or French programmes.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a decision has been taken to equip the future aircraft carriers to operate conventional carrier aircraft as well as VSTOL aircraft. [21707]

Mr. Ingram: *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The future carriers are being designed to operate STOVL aircraft with an innovative design providing the ability to adapt them to operate conventional aircraft if required.

Future Rapid Effects System

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any international collaboration has been proposed in relation to the Future Rapid Effects System. [22354]

Mr. Ingram: Detailed studies during the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) initial assessment phase will investigate whether international collaboration offers a potential solution for FRES.

Gulf War Veterans

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen and women from Wales who served in the 1990–91 Gulf conflict are suffering from diagnosed illnesses. [22437]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Information on all the illnesses reported by members of the armed forces is not held centrally. For serving personnel, medical records are normally held locally by service medical officers. For individuals who have left the services, the normal practice is to offer the records to their GPs for permanent retention.

Hearing Loss

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* medical and *(b)* scientific research his Department has (i) commissioned and (ii) evaluated to support the use of 50 decibels as the threshold for veterans claiming compensation for noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss as a result of their military service. [23575]

Mr. Touhig: Neither the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for veterans matters, nor the former Department of Social Security, which was responsible for the War Pensions Scheme until 2001 and remains responsible for the related civilian Industrial Injuries Scheme, have commissioned medical or scientific research on this issue. However, the Government's approach to noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss assessment is based on contemporary scientific evidence and understanding. This has been confirmed in recent years by several reviews carried out by independent audiological experts including the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council which confirmed the appropriateness of the threshold in November 2002.

Housing

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on the letting of his Department's Housing Prime Contract. [23325]

Mr. Touhig: In April 2005 Modern Housing Solutions, a joint venture company (comprising Carillion, WS Atkins and Enterprise) was appointed Designated Contractor for the Housing Prime Contract. The Ministry of Defence has, since that date, undertaken the normal internal approvals processes and contract award is expected before the end of this calendar year, with the successful contractor being fully operational by the end of financial year 2005–06.

Iraq

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British soldiers serving in Iraq are residents of *(a)* London and *(b)* Kingston and Surbiton. [16686]

Mr. Touhig: Deployment data are not held centrally in databases of individual records and it is therefore not possible to give figures by place of residence.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what financial assistance the US has provided to the UK military deployment in Iraq. [22251]

John Reid: The US provides funding in a number of areas to support the Coalition mission in the UK-led Multi-National Division (South East) but the US provides no direct funding for the UK military deployment in Iraq.

Irish Regiments (Posthumous Pardons)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when and at what level discussions have taken place with representatives of the Irish Government following their submission for posthumous pardons in respect of 26 soldiers of Irish regiments executed in the Great War for cowardice and desertion; and if he will make a statement; [24124]

(2) if he will place in the Library copies of submissions received from the Irish Government requesting that consideration be given to granting posthumous pardons in respect of 26 soldiers of Irish regiments executed in the Great War for cowardice and desertion. [24125]

Mr. Touhig: Officials from the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are involved in continuing discussions with the Irish Government about their submission and our response to it. It would not be helpful to those discussions for us to consider releasing the Irish Government's submission before we have decided what our final response should be and advised them of it.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23405]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence recently issued a revised policy to the armed forces which set them challenging targets to address the literacy and numeracy needs of their personnel. The policy makes clear that achievement must be evidenced by the gaining of a nationally recognised qualification and all support must work towards this end. Work is continuing to examine how the policy can be extended to meet the needs of the MOD civil service but meanwhile is being promoted through online advice and its network of learning and development advisers.

The MOD continue to support the gaining of qualifications by making testing opportunities as easily available as possible. Personnel are able to access national tests readily at many of the Department's network of electronic learning centres, within UK and in overseas garrisons.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23426]

Mr. Touhig: The information that has been requested is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Married Quarters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many married quarters have been upgraded in each of the last three years. [23327]

Mr. Touhig: The following number of married quarters (in England, Wales and Scotland) have been upgraded to the DE Standard 1 for Condition in each of the last three years.

Financial year	*Number upgraded*
2004–05	2,610
2003–04	1,402
2002–03	1,440

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many properties his Department's married quarters estate possesses in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. [23329]

Mr. Touhig: As at 27 October 2005, there were 44,225 properties in England and 1,092 in Wales.

Medals

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average waiting period before an application for a 1939–45 medal is dealt with was in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [21130]

Mr. Touhig: Applications for World War II medals are currently being processed within 12 months of receipt. However, applications for the terminally ill and veterans who are over 90 years of age are given priority and processed immediately. Towards the end of this calendar year, by which time the bulk of Suez Canal Zone Medal applications will have been assessed, more resources will become available to meet the continuing demand for World War II medals.

Patrol Boats

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the current situation is with regard to the sale of patrol boats by British Aerospace to Brunei; to what extent the UK Government underwrote the deal; whether the Government played a part in resolving the dispute over the deal; whether a cost to the Government have been incurred; and if he will make a statement. [23007]

Mr. Ingram: This is a matter for the parties to the contract, BAE Systems and the Government of Brunei. The United Kingdom Government have been encouraging the parties to reach agreement, but it would be inappropriate to comment on the progress of the discussions. For commercial reasons, it is the Government's practice not to comment on whether it has underwritten any such contract. The Royal Navy, with the agreement of both parties, last year undertook an independent study of the progress of the programme. The costs of the short study were met by the Ministry of Defence.

Personnel Transfers

John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF personnel have been transferred in 2005 from front line squadrons to work in the Harrier Maintenance Facility on the Joint Upgrade and Maintenance Programme; and how many volunteered to do so. [21128]

Mr. Ingram: In September 2005, 34 RAF personnel were temporarily transferred from front line squadrons to work in the Harrier Maintenance Facility on the Joint Upgrade and Maintenance Programme (JUMP). On current plans, this temporary transfer will end in March 2006.

Transfers of this nature are an integral part of the JUMP contract, which is designed to accommodate additional maintenance requirements in support of operations.

QinetiQ

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the final cost was of the 2003 QinetiQ 1 balloon launch; and from what budget this was funded. [23633]

Mr. Ingram: The QinetiQ 1 balloon was a QinetiQ sponsored project and did not involve any funding from Ministry of Defence. It is an operational matter for the company; questions should be referred to the company's chief executive.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many infantry Territorial Army privates have served in Iraq since March 2003; and what proportion they are of the total Territorial Army contribution. [22362]

Mr. Touhig: Since March 2003 some 1,275 infantry Territorial Army (TA) privates have served in Iraq in an infantry role, which represents approximately 12 per cent. of the total TA contribution. This figure does not include members of the TA who have an infantry cap badge but were deployed in a non infantry role, as individual reinforcements. Information relating to these individuals could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of the cost of the *(a)* Swan Hunter-built vessels and *(b)* BAE Systems-built vessels which form part of the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project. [20391]

Mr. Ingram: The current contract values for the costs associated with the build of the Swan Hunter vessels is £236 million and £176 million for the BAE Systems vessels. The Swan Hunter contract includes £62 million for the provision of Lead Yard Equipment and Services in support of the construction of the two BAE Systems ships, and £11 million for initial spares provisioning for all four ships. Both companies have indicated likely cost increases to their programmes, and as these are subject to commercial discussions between the Ministry of Defence and the companies. I am unable to give further details at this time.

CABINET OFFICE

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone. [23308]

Mr. Hutton: No call centres were run by the Cabinet Office and its agencies in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to date.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22562]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is as follows:

Department

Cabinet Office

Title of consultation

Reform of public sector ombudsman services in England.

Commencement date

2 August 2005.

Deadline for responses

18 November 2005.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his department's skills development plan. [23856]

Mr. Hutton: Each department's human resources director is responsible for ensuring that their department develops and implements a skills development plan.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23358]

Mr. Hutton: The department did not run specific in-house training on either literacy or numeracy programmes in 2002 and 2003. Between June 2004 and March 2005, the department spent £7,200 on in-house literacy training. This training was embedded in events designed to improve business writing skills. The cost per head of these events was £100 per attendee. There was no specific training on numeracy skills in this period.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23378]

Mr. Hutton: Since 2002, two employees in the department have requested training to improve their literacy and numeracy skills via their union learning representative.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy amongst employees of his Department. [23402]

Mr. Hutton: The department has made information packs on skills for life available to all staff. These packs have promoted the initial assessment tests in literacy and numeracy. The tests have also been promoted through the department's union learning representative and at specific learning events such as learning at work day 2005. The departmental intranet is currently being updated to consolidate existing information about skills for life initiatives, including access to national tests.

Parliamentary Ombudsman

Damian Green: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps he is taking to reduce the delays in cases taken up by the parliamentary ombudsman; and if he will make a statement. [22688]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable), 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, 1063W.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what discussions she has had with the BBC in the context of Charter renewal regarding its planned move to Manchester; and if she will make a statement; [23926]

(2) if she will make a statement on the BBC's modernisation plans that are linked to charter renewal. [23927]

Tessa Jowell: I will set out the results of BBC Charter review in a White Paper, due to be published in the next few months.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23727]

James Purnell: We have no current plans to join the Carbon Trust Carbon Management programme. My Department took advantage last year of the free energy survey then offered by the Carbon Trust and put their recommendations in place. We are also in the early stages of planning a major refurbishment of our headquarters building and will be using this opportunity to pursue further energy savings measures.

Cricket

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to support local amateur cricket clubs. [23958]

Mr. Caborn: The Government, through Sport England, makes Grant Awards to the English Cricket Board (ECB) to support their delivery of both the professional and amateur game in England and Wales. A key part of the ECB's strategy for the next four years, as laid out in their plan "Building Partnerships—cricket's strategic plan" focuses on increasing participation especially among young people and from 2006 they will be investing £10.6 million to help achieve this including supporting more cricket facilities at local clubs.

Sport England also makes awards to the ECB under the Community Club Development Program (CCDP) under which £9.4 million has been earmarked for cricket. In the first year of the CCDP programme, more than 100 local clubs have been supported.

The Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) scheme, launched in 2002, has also been of significant financial value to amateur cricket clubs. In October 2005, cricket clubs made up the largest sporting sector registered under the scheme—over 600 of the 3,300 clubs with CASC status. CASC has been worth £7.5 million to sports clubs in total; so, an estimated £1.5 million has been put back into grassroots cricket through tax reliefs.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which individual is responsible for developing and implementing her department's skills development plan. [23853]

Mr. Lammy: The department's skills development plan is developed and implemented by a number of officials under the supervision of the department's head of human resources.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will place in the Library a copy of her department's skills development plan. [23873]

Mr. Lammy: Yes.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of new recruits to her Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23781]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is not recorded as we recruit on the basis of a competency assessment not qualifications.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of her Department. [23784]

Mr. Lammy: Recruitment is based on a competency assessment. The Department's core competences are people management, financial management, project and programme management, analysis and use of evidence and partnership working and stakeholder management.

London Olympic Games

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her latest estimate is of the *(a)* cost of and *(b)* completion dates for the construction of stadiums for the 2012 London Olympics; and if she will make a statement. [15587]

Tessa Jowell: Details of estimated costs and completion dates for the construction of stadia for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympics games can be found in chapters six and eight of the Candidature File, which was presented to the International Olympic Committee in November 2004. This information can be found at http://www.london2012.org/en/news/publications/Candidatefile/.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the original budget was for site assembly for the London 2012 Olympics; and what the current estimate is of the money required. [22612]

Tessa Jowell: The original budget set by the London Development Agency for land assembly was £478 million. This budget is being reviewed to reflect the land assembly required and the level of remediation involved. It will continue to be re-appraised and re-assessed in accordance with the effective project management of a capital project of this scale.

Nazi Plundered Material

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the negotiations begun in 2001 to find the appropriate route to remove the legislative barriers preventing the return of Nazi plundered material. [23925]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is planning to issue a public consultation document in due course, which will contain the detailed proposals for legislation.

Public Appointments

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what public appointments she made in the last financial year; and if she will make a statement. [21465]

Tessa Jowell: The details of each public appointment, made by myself and my Department's Ministers, are announced on my Department's website at www.culture.gov.uk/public appointments. The public appointments made in the last financial year, ending 31 March 2005, were as follows:

	Appointments
National Gallery	Prof. Mervyn King
National Heritage Memorial Fund	Dr. Tristram Hunt Dr. Brian Lang MA PhD Matthew Saunders MBE
National Maritime Museum	Admiral The Lord Boyce GCB OBE Gilly Drummond Sir John Guinness CB Alan Titchmarsh MBE
National Museums Liverpool	Professor Drummond Bone Lorraine Rogers Brian Wong
National Portrait Gallery	Zeinab Badawi Lady Douro
Public Lending Right Advisory Committee	Anthony Bradman
Royal Armouries	Jon Hammond Patricia Langham John Siddall
Royal Parks Advisory Board	Prof. Sir Peter Crane
S4C	John Walter Jones Winston Roddick CB QC
Sport England	Michael Farrar Karren Brady
Tate Gallery	Melanie Clore Fiona Rae
Theatres Trust	Jason Barnes Simon Callow CBE Marilyn Cutts Sam Shrouder
UK Film Council	Andrew Eaton Alison Owen Marc Samuelson Iain Smith David Sproxton Stewart Till
Victoria and Albert Museum	Betty Jackson Samir Shah OBE
VisitBritain	Lord Marshall of Knightsbridge

Regional Casinos

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for how long the first regional casino will be open before she assesses its impact. [24043]

Mr. Caborn: The Government will ask the Gambling Commission to advise on the impact of the one regional, eight large and eight small casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005 no earlier than three years after the award of the first premises licence.

Television Signal

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of *(a)* people and *(b)* households in (i) Kingston and Surbiton constituency and (ii) London can receive analogue but not digital television signals. [23880]

James Purnell: The vast majority of households in the UK can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via at least one of digital satellite, digital terrestrial, cable or DSL broadband.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency or town but the Government are committed to ensuring that at digital switchover everyone in the UK who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them on digital systems.

Tri-nations Rugby League

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether *(a)* she and *(b)* the Minister for Sport intends to attend one of the forthcoming Tri-Nations rugby league matches. [23956]

Mr. Caborn: I hope to attend the Final in Leeds on 26 November, subject to diary commitments, but my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State is unable to attend any of the forthcoming Tri-Nations rugby league matches.

Wembley Stadium

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on progress being made with the new Wembley stadium; and when she expects it to be open for sporting events. [23955]

Mr. Caborn: Wembley National Stadium Ltd and the Football Association are working towards hosting the 2006 FA cup final at Wembley.

This is an extremely complex project that will ensure that Wembley remains one of the world's great sporting venues and a fitting stadium for football in the 21st century.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the UK position is on the proposed United Nations Security Council resolution that would require the regime in Burma to work with the United Nations to restore democracy to Burma and release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience; and if he will make a statement. [22547]

Ian Pearson: The UK supports any action in the UN Security Council which would help to promote reform and positive change in Burma.

The UK remains deeply concerned about the political and human rights situation in Burma. The UK has been at the forefront of all efforts over many years to bring pressure to bear on the military regime to reform and respect human rights. We fully support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, and the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Sergio Pinheiro, and call on Burma's military regime to co-operate fully with them, and to allow them full access to Burma.

We regularly raise our concerns about the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other prisoners of conscience in Burma with the military regime, most recently on 26 October, when our ambassador in Rangoon met the Burmese Home Minister, Major General Maung Oo.

We look forward to the immediate release of all political detainees without condition, in order to enable the participation of all social and political forces in the reconciliation process.

Congo

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent violence in the Walungu territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [22554]

Ian Pearson: Areas of instability remain in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In Ituri and the Kivus, the security situation remains fragile, with civilians continuing to suffer abuses by armed groups.

We were appalled by the recent atrocities against civilians in South Kivu, including those committed near Walungu, which have been attributed to hard-line elements of the Rwandan Hutu rebel group, the Forces Democratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR).

We support the UN peacekeeping mission's robust approach to protecting civilians and tackling armed groups in Ituri, which they are beginning to replicate in the Kivus. Despite these efforts to disrupt the activities of the FDLR, the FDLR continues to persecute civilians. We have urged regional governments to work together to disarm these groups.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 following the Lyons review; where they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [23711]

Mr. Straw: 31 posts were relocated from London in 2004–05. 11 went to Hanslope Park and 20 were functions redistributed to overseas posts.

In 2005–06 we expect to relocate 30 human resources posts from London to Hanslope Park. Over 85 per cent. of the jobs will be filled locally.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many full-time equivalent employee reductions as a result of the Gershon review have been made; what *(a)* cost savings relating to IT projects and *(b)* total value of efficiency savings (i) were achieved in 2004–05 and (ii) are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [23990]

Mr. Straw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Rayleigh (Mr. Francois) on 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 635W, on the progress of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's efficiency programme.

In 2004–05 efficiency savings of £0.2 million were due to IT projects. In 2005–06 we expect £3.9 million of savings attributable to better IT.

Director of the Americas

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a decision will be made on the appointment of his Department's Director of the Americas. [22695]

Mr. Straw: An appointment will be confirmed very shortly.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the security situation on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. [23670]

Ian Pearson: We are gravely concerned at the decision of the Government of Eritrea on 4 October to prohibit United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) helicopter flights and at additional restrictions imposed since then on the operations of UNMEE. We have urged the Government of Eritrea to remove these restrictions immediately.

We fully support the UN Security Council Presidential statement calling on Eritrea to immediately reverse its decision. We also call on both parties to

implement completely and without further delay the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and to create the necessary conditions for demarcation of their border to proceed.

EU Committees

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the European Union committees for which non-civil service nominations are made by the Government. [22836]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The principal European Union committees established under the treaties to which the Government nominate individuals who are not members of the civil service are the European Economic and Social Committee and the EU Committee of the Regions. Both have a consultative role, advising the other institutions on a range of matters in their respective fields of competence. There are many working level committees under the comitology management procedures which contain member state experts who may not be civil servants.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the UK members of the *(a)* European Economic and Social Committee, *(b)* Committee of the Regions and *(c)* European Social Fund Committee since May 1997; and for what reason each was nominated. [22837]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I have made lists of the UK members of these committees available in the Library of the House. In the case of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, the lists cover the period since 1997, but for the European Social Fund Committee only a list of current members is readily available. I will make a list of previous members of that Committee available in the Library as soon as possible. The civil servants who are members of the European Social Fund Committee are not listed, in accordance with established practice.

UK members of the employers' and trade unions' groups of the Economic and Social Committee (EESC) are nominated by the Department of Trade and Industry, and members of the "other interests" (wider civil society) group are nominated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, following consultation by both Departments with relevant civil society groups. In accordance with the EESC's purpose, candidates are chosen for their ability to represent the interests of UK civil society in the European Union.

UK members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) are nominated after consultation with local authorities, and with the devolved Administrations. In accordance with the CoR's purpose, they are chosen for their ability to represent the interests of the UK's regions in the European Union. Like all CoR members, they must hold an elected mandate at local or regional level.

My right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister approve the overall composition of the UK delegations to both committees, and take into account the candidates' level of expertise in their respective fields, as well as the UK delegations' overall balance, particularly with regard to their regional, political, ethnic and gender composition.

UK members of the European Social Fund Committee are nominated by the Department of Work and Pensions, the Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress. Each of these nominates two full members and one alternate, and chooses its representatives on the basis of their competence in the questions with which the committee deals under its mandate, which is to advise the Commission on the administration of the European Social Fund.

EU Press Officers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many press officers are employed by the European Union; and at what cost. [22841]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The number of press officers employed by the principal bodies of the European Union fluctuates. Currently, the Council Secretariat employs 13, the Commission 27, the Parliament 53, including 20 in the Parliament's information offices in the member states, the Court of Justice eight, including the head of press service, the court of auditors one, and the European ombudsman one. The EU's advisory bodies, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, employ one and two respectively. The member states of the council also, of course, employ their own press officers.

It has not been possible to determine the cost of all of these positions, as they could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

European Commission (Staff)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK nationals serve *(a)* in the Cabinets and *(b)* in senior posts in each Directorate General of the European Commission; and what proportion of the number of relevant posts this represents in each case. [22840]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In the Cabinets of the 25 Commissioners there are three British Heads of Cabinet, three British Deputy Heads and 17 British administrative grade members, about 12 per cent. of the total.

Of the 281 posts in the Commission at Director General, Deputy Director General and Director level, 38 (13.5 per cent.) are British. Of the most senior jobs, Director General and Deputy Director General level, seven out of 53 (13.2 per cent.) are British, including the Directors General of Directorate General (DG) Competition, DG Freedom, Security and Justice, DG Regional Policy and DG Health and Consumer Affairs and the Deputy Directors General of DG Budget, DG External Relations and DG Development.

Gibraltar

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty the Queen plans to visit Gibraltar in 2007. [22945]

Mr. Straw: I refer to the reply I gave the hon. Member on 12 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 967W. This remains the situation.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar. [22959]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not held any direct discussions with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Peter Caruana, this year. However, I had talks with Mr. Caruna on 21 July. Mr. Caruna has also had regular meetings with senior officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on various issues.

Iran

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the United Nations Security Council to give greater power to the UN investigation team to determine whether Iran is attempting to build an atomic bomb. [22550]

Dr. Howells: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the responsible authority, under UN mandate, with the power to investigate outstanding questions in relation to the implementation of safeguards agreements under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty to which Iran is party. It is because Iran's nuclear programme remains of serious concern to the international community that the IAEA are continuing their investigations, and will report their findings accordingly.

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will impose a full economic embargo on the Iranian regime until such time as it halts its progress on building an atomic bomb. [22551]

Dr. Howells: The UK remains committed to working with its international partners for a diplomatic solution that provides objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is for solely peaceful purposes. The UK continues to urge Iran to meet promptly, and in full, the requests made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, and to return to talks with the E3/EU on the basis of the Paris Agreement. The IAEA Board of Governors resolution of 24 September found Iran non-compliant with its safeguards obligations, which under the IAEA Statute will require the Director-General to make a report to the UN Security Council at some point. The members of the Security Council should then decide what action is appropriate. We have made clear to Iran that it can by its actions influence the timing of any report to the Security Council and the climate in which it is received.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Iran about its nuclear programme; and if he will make a statement. [22696]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, last met his Iranian counterpart, Manoucher Mottaki, at United Nations General Assembly in New York on 21 September. The Foreign Secretary made clear his disappointment at Iran's public rejection of the E3/EU proposals and that Iran's resumption of uranium conversion was contrary to the requests of successive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board resolutions and in violation of the 2004 Paris Agreement. The Foreign Secretary urged Iran to reinstate the suspension, meet promptly and in full the requests of the IAEA Board of Governors and return to talks with the E3/EU on the basis of the Paris Agreement.

Irish Regiments (Posthumous Pardons)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he received a formal request from the Irish Government to consider granting posthumous pardons in respect of 26 soldiers of Irish regiments executed in the great war for cowardice and desertion; and if he will make a statement. [24126]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign Minister of Ireland, Dermot Ahern, submitted his request to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 26 October 2004.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to respond to the Irish Government's request that the Government consider granting posthumous pardons in respect of 26 soldiers of Irish regiments executed in the great war for cowardice and desertion; and if he will make a statement. [24127]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary responded to the Irish Foreign Minister, Dermot Ahern's request on 16 November 2004, explaining that the matter fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence and that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid) would respond after due consideration.

Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings have taken place since 6 July between British and Kyrgyz officials to discuss the situation of remaining Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. [22909]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since 6 July, the UK and the EU have remained fully engaged on the situation regarding the remaining Uzbek refugees in Krygyzstan. Our Ambassador visited the refugee camp in Jalalabad, Kyrgyzstan on 6 July and met the Governor of the Jalalabad region. He followed that up with a meeting on 7 July with the then Kyrgyz Foreign Minister, Otunbaeva. As presidency of the EU, on 27 July we asked the Germans, as the local presidency in Bishkek, to demarche the Kyrgyz authorities on the welfare and fate of the refugees.

On 29 July, the EU issued a statement welcoming the departure of 439 of the refugees from Kyrgyzstan. On 4 August, my hon. Friend, the Minister for State for Trade for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Ian Pearson) called the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan. My hon. Friend reaffirmed the EU's appreciation for the role played by the Kyrgyz authorities in the onward transit of the 439 refugees, and re-emphasised the importance of the remaining 15 refugees being treated in accordance with international conventions. Our Charge d'Affaires spoke to the then Foreign Minister, Otunbaeva and her deputy on the same issue on 14–15 August.

On 21 September, as presidency of the EU, we issued a further statement welcoming the departure from Kyrgyzstan of 11 of the remaining refugees, but again noting the importance of the remaining four being treated in accordance with international treaties. This message was repeated at the Sixth EU-Kyrgyzstan Co-operation Committee in Brussels on 27 September.

Throughout this period our Embassy has been in close contact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Our Ambassador last met Prime Minister Kulov on 28 September. We will continue to remain engaged on this issue for as long as any of the refugees remain in Kyrgyzstan.

South Atlantic (Icebreaking Vessels)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the application of EU legislation on icebreaking capabilities of UK vessels in the South Atlantic. [22835]

Ian Pearson: The EU has not passed legislation concerning the icebreaking capabilities for vessels, whether in the South Atlantic or elsewhere.

The United Nations' International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has issued Arctic Guidelines for vessels operating in the regions north of 60 degrees north. These guidelines include constructional, navigational and equipment standards. There are plans to extend these guidelines to the South Atlantic but this is unlikely to be finalised before 2008.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he plans to make to the recent call by the Secretary General of the United Nations for increased international action concerning Darfur. [22894]

Ian Pearson: As my hon. Friend will know, the UK has been at the forefront of international action concerning Darfur. My noble Friend, the Minister for Africa visited Sudan, including Darfur, on 5–8 October and participated in the EU Troika's meetings with senior Sudanese officials. We have provided expert assistance to the Abuja Peace talks and are willing to provide more. We have already provided almost £32 million for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), fully supported the African Union request for securing a further contribution of £70 million from the European Commission, bringing the total EU contribution to AMIS to €162 million. We are exploring all practical steps to ensure that AMIS has access to the military equipment donated to the mission to ensure it can operate effectively. The UK has provided £92 million in humanitarian aid to Darfur since September 2003, and we are calling for others to do more. We continue to work with international partners, including in our role as presidency of the EU, to ensure that the international community is taking full action on Darfur. To this end, we hosted a meeting for key international partners on 1 November in London.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what protective measures have been put in place for the operations of non-governmental organisations in Darfur. [22011]

Hilary Benn: I have been asked to reply.

The UK has provided the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) with funding to support its field security co-ordination structure in Darfur. Following pressure from the UK, the UNDSS has deployed eight field security co-ordination officers in Darfur. The UNDSS has worked closely with NGOs and established reporting mechanisms in each Darfur state to relay timely security information. It provides a dedicated 24-hour VHF radio channel to receive and respond to emergency calls from NGOs operating in Darfur and also holds regular security briefings. Given the current security situation, we are working closely with the UNDSS to improve the effectiveness of their operations.

In addition, we have provided funding to the NGO Red-R to train humanitarian NGOs in Darfur in security skills, procedures and practice. Red-R is providing Darfur specific programmes, including pre-deployment training, in-country safety workshops and driver training.

The African Union (AU) Mission also has a vital role to play and we have provided £32 million towards its expansion. There is no doubt that where it is deployed it is having a positive impact on security and it has also offered to escort humanitarian convoys. However, the situation remains difficult.

Tashkent

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings HM Ambassador in Tashkent has had with *(a)* President Karimov and *(b)* Foreign Minister Ganiev since he presented his credentials on 8 June. [22848]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our Ambassador, David Moran, has not met President Karimov since their long meeting during the presentation of his credentials. He last met Foreign Minister Ganiev on 5 October and has been in regular contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He called on the First Deputy Foreign Minister on 20 June, 29 July and 26 October. He also called on the Minister of Internal Affairs on 23 June, the Minister of Justice on 8 July and the First Deputy Prime Minister on 22 July.

Tonga

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the government of Tonga in support of a more democratic constitution. [23060]

Ian Pearson: The UK has made numerous representations to the Tongan authorities on a wide range of good goverhance and human rights issues. The high commissioner in Tonga has maintained a regular dialogue with Members of the Tongan Royal Family, Government Ministers, Nobles and Peoples MPs and encouraged the introduction of political and democratic reforms. Working with other partners, we have also encouraged the restoration of freedom of expression and of the press, and the selection of some Cabinet Members from elected MPs.

UN Arms Conference

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the UK's goals for the UN arms conference in 2006. [23056]

Dr. Howells: The Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action (UN PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons takes place in New York in July 2006. The UK's aims, in co-operation with other members of the international community, are to build support for adoption of minimum common criteria for controls on transfers including the import, export and transhipment of Small Arms and Light Weapons; and to secure agreement on further work under the UN PoA on the issue of transfer controls. Overall, our ideal outcome for the Review Conference is an extension, without reopening it, of the UN PoA mandate; this will facilitate a more effective response to illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits HM Ambassador to Uzbekistan has made to the city of Andijan since 1 August. [22902]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Her Majesty's Ambassador has made several visits to Andizhan since the events of 13 May. He has not made any further visits been there since 1 August. Other members of the Embassy staff have visited three times since then, and the Embassy has also had regular briefings from other visitors to the region.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of *(a)* the strength and activities of the Islamic Jihad Union in Uzbekistan and *(b)* the level of threat that organisation poses to UK security and interests. [22903]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU) publicly claimed responsibility for a series of attacks that occurred in Tashkent and Bukhara in March/April 2004. They have also publicly claimed responsibility for mounting suicide attacks against the American and Israeli Embassies in Tashkent in July 2004. It is not our policy to provide intelligence available on groups that have been proscribed in the UK, but we assess that IJU poses a threat to Western interests in Uzbekistan.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK diplomats have observed the work of the Uzbek parliamentary commission investigating the events in Andijan on 13 May. [22904]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have not been part of the official diplomatic team observing the work of the Uzbek parliamentary committee, but we have monitored its activities. We and our EU partners have continued to call for an independent international investigation.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any meetings have been held under the EU Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with Uzbek government representations since 13 May. [22905]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to inquire into the well-being of the Uzbek dissident Saidjahon Zainabitdinov since his detention on 21 May on charges of terrorism. [22906]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Following the events in Andizhan of 12–13 May 2005, we have been extremely concerned by reports of the arrest and harassment of eyewitnesses, independent journalists and human rights activists. On 1 June, our Ambassador raised these concerns at a meeting between EU Ambassadors and Foreign Minister Ganiev.

Our Embassy delivered notes to the Uzbek authorities in May, June and August, registering our concern at the arrest of Saidjahon Zainabitdinov, the head of the 'Appeal' human rights NGO. Our Ambassador, David Moran, has also made regular representations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at ministerial and official level. EU presidency statements on 20 September and 19 and 26 October reiterated our concerns at the treatment of human rights activists and others since the Andizhan events. We continue to urge the Uzbek Government to respect their wider international commitments to democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken to secure international observers at the trial of the Andijan demonstrators understood to be taking place in Uzbekistan. [22907]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: At the beginning of the trial on 20 September, the UK, as presidency of the EU, issued a statement calling on the Uzbek government to conduct the trials in line with international norms and standards and to allow members of the international community to observe them. UK officials were present at the trials from the start and we agreed with EU colleagues to ensure an EU presence every day at the trial. This is on-going.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe have expressed concern to the Uzbek authorities about the extent of access that their monitors at the trial have been allowed. Our Ambassador and his deputy raised the question of full access for international observers and diplomats with First Deputy Foreign Ministers Nematov and Mustafayev in September and October.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to determine the *(a)* whereabouts and *(b)* well-being of the Uzbek refugees from the Andijan massacre (i) Dilshod Khajiev, (ii) Tavakal Khajiev, (iii) Hasan Shakirov and (iv) Mukhammad Kadirov. [22908]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since the events of 12–13 May in Andizhan, our Ambassador and his team in Tashkent have continued to co-operate closely with the OSCE and a range of human rights bodies including the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee for the Red Cross. This has also been the case with the four refugees illegally returned from Kyrgyzstan on 9 June. We have also been in regular contact with the UNHCR in Geneva.

On 23 August, the Uzbek Procurator General's Office issued a statement stating that all four remained in custody and that they would all be charged with crimes directly related to their involvement in the May events in Andizhan, including the execution of hostages and civilians. None of the four are among the fifteen currently standing trial in Tashkent for their alleged involvement in events in Andizhan.

The Uzbek Procurator General's Office has categorically denied rumours that one of the four, Hasan Shakirov, has died in custody as a result of being tortured. But as yet neither we nor, it appears, any international body has been granted access to them.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2005; *Official Report*, columns 1777–8W, on Uzbekistan, what further steps he has taken to secure the Uzbek government's compliance with the call by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 13 June to investigate the unrest in Uzbekistan. [22977]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Following the measures referred to in the answer I gave the hon. Member on 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1777–1778W, the UK, as presidency of the European Union, played a lead role in preparations for the visit to Uzbekistan on 8–9 September of Mr. Jan Kubis, the EU's newly appointed Special Representative for Central Asia. In the light of Uzbekistan's continued failure to respond to requests for an independent inquiry, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary chaired a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers at the EUs General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on 3 October, which agreed to suspend indefinitely all scheduled technical meetings under the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, to adopt an arms embargo to cover exports to Uzbekistan of arms, military equipment and other equipment that might be used for internal repression, and to restrict admission to the European Union of those individuals directly responsible for the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Andizhan. In addition, the European Commission's funding programme for Uzbekistan worth €9.2 million in 2005–06, has been re-oriented in order to support increased focus on poverty reduction, and the promotion of democracy, human rights and civil society.

These measures will be implemented for an initial period of one year. But they will be kept under review in the light of any subsequent international inquiry, the co-operation or otherwise of the Uzbeks with such an enquiry and the conduct of the on-going trials.

In accordance with the 3 October statement by the GAERC, the UK, along with the rest of the EU and other like-minded partners, is continuing to explore other relevant mechanisms within the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the UN that may help secure independent inquiry by external experts. The UK and the rest of the EU continues to urge the Uzbek authorities to allow and co-operate with such an inquiry.

Western Sahara

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the United Nations on a referendum on the future of Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement. [22018]

Dr. Howells: The UK supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and his new Personal Envoy to Western Sahara, Peter van Walsum, to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute. UK officials in New York are in daily contact with the UN and representatives of the parties to the dispute.

On 28 October the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UNSCR 1634 which renewed the mandate for the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The Government supported this. There are, however, no plans for a UN referendum to be held in the near future.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had in advance of December's World Trade Organisation talks; and if he will make a statement. [22694]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: A successful, pro-development outcome to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial conference in Hong Kong in December is a UK presidency priority. My Department and other relevant Government Departments are taking every opportunity to discuss the WTO Round with our EU partners, the European Commission and other WTO members and stakeholders. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary chaired a discussion on this issue at a meeting of EU Foreign Ministers on 18 October, which I attended. The issue was also discussed by EU Development Ministers on 24 October and EU Agriculture Ministers on 25 October. My right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade discussed the WTO Round with key players during a recent visit to Geneva.

These included the Indian and Australian Trade Ministers and the WTO Director General. The WTO Round will also be discussed at the informal meeting of EU Trade Ministers on 21 November.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Spending

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for (i) capital projects and (ii) revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23507]

Alun Michael: The South East England Development Agency has allocated £3,418,633 in the Milton Keynes area on behalf of the Department during the last five years. This consists of £1,304,765 of Capital and £2,113,868 of Revenue funding and was allocated as follows:

£

	Capital	*Revenue*
2000–01		
Wolverton Works & Symbiosis (SRB scheme)	204,629	44,341
Total	204,629	44,341
2001–02		
New Start for Netherfield (SRB scheme)	5,000	20,660
Core funding—Milton Keynes Economic Partnership	—	50,000
Total	5,000	70,660
2002–03		
Spotlight on Bletchley (SRB scheme)	75,000	321,601
New Start for Netherfield (SRB scheme)	—	5,816
Core funding—Milton Keynes Economic Partnership	—	50,000
Total	75,000	377,417

£

	Capital	Revenue
2003–04		
Milton Keynes Enterprise Hubs	—	40,000
Spotlight on Bletchley (SRB scheme)	100,076	317,768
Developing an Economic Vision for Milton Keynes	—	119,648
Core funding—Milton Keynes Economic Partnership	—	95,000
Wolverton Works & Symbiosis (SRB scheme)	328,399	—
Oxford to Cambridge Arc	—	70,000
Total	428,475	642,416
2004–05		
Milton Keynes Enterprise Hubs	—	84,000
Wolverton Feasibility Study	30,000	—
Spotlight on Bletchley (SRB scheme)	40,895	245,359
Developing an Economic Vision for Milton Keynes	—	7,817
Core funding—Milton Keynes Economic Partnership	—	85,000
Hatchery—Milton Keynes Hub	9,476	—
R & D Grant—Morgana Systems Ltd.	54,809	—
Oxford to Cambridge Arc	—	70,000
Total	135,180	492,176
2005–06		
Milton Keynes Enterprise Hubs	147,481	—
Milton Keynes Area Programme	125,000	175,000
Spotlight on Bletchley (SRB scheme)	—	216,708
SRT Bucks/MK Co-ordinator	—	1,980
PT 2005–06 3 Parishes Bus Link	—	296
RTF 05–06 Bucks & MK RTPO		4,124
Core funding—Milton Keynes Economic Partnership	—	75,000
Milton Keynes Enterprise Gateway	55,000	—
Hatchery—Milton Keynes Hub	41,000	—
Stoney Stratford Project Manager	—	3,750
CUE Architecture Centre (Milton Keynes)	—	10,000
Oxford to Cambridge Arc	88,000	—
Total	456,481	486,858
Total all years	1,304,765	2,113,868
Capital and Revenue spend total	3,418,633	

Development Agencies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list each event at which the East of England Development Agency spent money on *(a)* hospitality and *(b)* corporate entertainment in the last three years; and what was the expenditure at each event. [19726]

Alun Michael: The full information could be provided only at disproportionate cost as the information requested is not quickly accessible in this format. However, I can provide the following data detailing the East of England Development Agency's spending on some significant and worthwhile corporate events for the year 2004–05.

I would draw attention to the fact that in 2003 EEDA launched an international competition calling for ideas and designs for a landmark or series of landmarks to create a regional identity for the East of England and represent it to the rest of the world. As part of the competition they held a series of public events in each county in the region that showcased over 230 entries from around the world.

Date	Event	Total cost excluding VAT (£)
30 April 2004	Summit with regional economic partners	3,854.96
29 November 2004	Annual General Meeting	14,456.45
January 2005	Dance East	1,000.00
15–16 March 2005	Sustainable Development Commission visit	1,538.50
17–18 June 2004	Space for Ideas—Synapse Event	3,008.00
7 July 2004	Ideas Talk—Edward de Bono at University of Hertfordshire	8,000.00
23 March 2005	Space for Ideas—Synapse Event 2	4,700.00
7 September 2004	Landmark event Cambridge	11,578
9–12 September 2004	Landmark event—Norwich	8,512
16–19 September 2004	Landmark event—Cambridge	5,675
15–17 October 2004	Landmark event—Essex	8,606
November 2004	Landmark dinner	3,131
February 2005	Landmark event—Suffolk	2,000

Equity Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on the public subsidy of local stock or business exchanges to raise equity finance, with particular reference to regional development agencies. [19716]

Alun Michael: Government and Regional Development Agencies are working together to improve the access that small businesses have to equity finance. In doing, so the Government and RDAs will operate within the State Aid rules.

Flexible Working

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to promote flexible working for those with *(a)* caring and *(b)* family responsibility; and if he will make a statement. [23396]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Many employers recognise the benefits of flexible working and almost a quarter of employees work through some form of flexible working arrangement. The Government encourages flexible working by promoting the benefits and sharing best practice. We have developed tailored guidance and ACAS have developed a web-based interactive tool, which includes a free online training module.

In April 2003 we introduced the right to request flexible working for parents of children under 6 and disabled children under 18. This legislation has been a tremendous success, with almost a quarter (22 per cent.) of parents with children under 6 requesting to work flexibly since the legislation was introduced and around 90 per cent. of requests accepted.

Building on this success, the recently introduced Work and Families Bill will seek to extend the scope of the existing law to include carers of adults, a group who face particular challenges in juggling their caring responsibilities with work. We will be consulting on the detail of exactly which carers will be covered by the legislation in early 2006.

London Skills Partnership

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the main achievements of the London Skills Partnership. [16404]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Education and Skills on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 216W.

Office of Fair Trading

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what criteria he uses when determining whether to intervene in a matter being reviewed by the Office of Fair Trading. [24442]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government's long established policy has been to remove itself from substantive decisions about the application of competition law. It is for the relevant independent competition authorities to consider individual competition cases. This policy is reflected in the UK's competition legislation. Where Ministers do retain statutory powers and responsibilities, these may be used in accordance with the relevant applicable law. For example, the scope for Ministers to refer a market to the Competition Commission is defined in Section 132 of the Enterprise Act 2002.

Postcodes

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Post Office's proposals to charge local authorities and other users to use postcodes. [23821]

Barry Gardiner: Statutory obligations relating to the management of the "Postcode Address File" are defined under Section 116 of the Postal Services Act 2000, which states that the File can be made "available to any person who wishes to use it on such terms as are reasonable". This obligation is specifically governed under Condition 20 of Royal Mail's licence issued by Postcomm which states that the company shall "furnish a copy of the File to any person who may request it upon payment of a reasonable charge".

Specific proposals relating to the management of the File are the direct responsibility of the company. I have therefore asked Adam Crozier, the Chief Executive of Royal Mail, to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Small Business Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses have consulted the Small Business Service in each year since 1997. [20960]

Alun Michael: The first port of call for anyone wanting help to start a business or to obtain other help as a business is the local Business Link. Business Link is the "national brand" and is delivered locally. As from April 2005 oversight of the local Business Link operators lies with each Regional Development Agency on behalf of the DTI's Small Business Service.

The following table shows the numbers of customers helped by Business Link operators, per year, since 2001–02. It shows both the number of existing businesses that have been helped by the Business Link Operators and also the total number of customers helped. The total number of customers includes those customers thinking of, or in the process of, starting a business (pre-starts). However, pre-starts are not available as an annual figure prior to 2003–04.

	Number of businesses helped	*Total number of customers helped*[1]
2001–02	245,342	245,342
2002–03	309,680	309,680
2003–04	435,293	605,937
2004–05	492,496	666,237
12 months ending June 2005	500,935	668,392

[1] Including those individuals thinking of, or in the process of starting a business.

Source:
Business Link Operator Management Information Returns.

The role of the Small Business Service itself is to lead on small business issues across government, working to inform and influence policymakers and those who provide business support. It is leading work to spell out what is involved in the "Business Link Brand" and the services or routes to service that can be expected by anyone who contacts a Business Link anywhere in the country which I hope to publish soon.

The Small Business Service has few direct enquiries from small businesses themselves, although it has very close relationships with the small business representative bodies as well as RDAs and many others.

Telephone Services (Charging)

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will ask Ofcom to investigate the practices of the companies Telecom Billing Services and Persolvo Debt Collection with regard to charging for telephone services. [22546]

Alun Michael: My officials have drawn this issue to Ofcom's attention. Ofcom is aware of the services being offered by Telecom Billing Services Ltd. but has previously been of the view that it has no direct regulatory powers over these services. However Ofcom is, in the process of reviewing this position in order to identify whether it may have the power to take action, in certain circumstances.

The OFT, and other enforcers including Trading Standards and Ofcom, have powers under part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002 to seek assurances from traders (including debt collectors like Persolvo) who consistently infringe a wide range of consumer protection legislation, that they will stop doing so. If traders continue to break the law they will face a fine and/or imprisonment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many acceptable behaviour contracts have been issued in each police force; and if he will make a statement. [21931]

Hazel Blears: Data on numbers of ABCs are not collected centrally. ABCs are voluntary agreements and therefore unsuitable for central data collection.

A recent survey carried out by the Home Office and sent to all CDRPs indicated that 5383 ABCs were made between October 2003 and September 2004.

Airsoft Weapons

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of the Violent Crimes Reduction Bill on the sport of airsoft in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [20470]

Hazel Blears: We are considering whether it would be appropriate and possible for the sport of airsoft to be exempted from the provisions of the Bill without undermining its main purpose. Under the provisions of the Bill as currently drafted, participants will still be able to use their existing guns and will be able to buy any airsoft which is not so realistic as to make it indistinguishable from a real firearm.

Alcohol-related Violence

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action his Department is taking to tackle alcohol-related violence; and how many incidents of alcohol-related violence took place in each of the last three years in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Northumbria police force area and *(c)* Wansbeck constituency. [14537]

Hazel Blears: The Government take alcohol-related crime and disorder extremely seriously. That is why we introduced the Violent Crime Reduction Bill on 8 June 2005 which proposes a new package of measures to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence. The proposals, which are based on those outlined in the consultation document 'Drinking Responsibly' which was published on 21 January 2005, include: a new power for the police and local authorities to designate alcohol disorder zones in areas with a significant problem; a new drinking banning order which would exclude individuals responsible for alcohol-related disorder from certain areas and licensed premises; a new power for the police to ban the sale of alcohol at licensed premises for up to 48 hours if they persistently sell to under 18s; and a new power for the police to exclude individuals at risk of carrying out alcohol-related disorder from a specific area for up to 48 hours.

These new powers build on the range of measures already available to the police and licensing authorities to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder. They seek to balance a recognition of the collective responsibility that the alcohol trade should take for addressing some of these problems with a continued emphasis on the responsibility of the individual drinker or premise.

The Home Office collates National Statistics on recorded crime including offences of violence. These statistics are available for police force area and crime and disorder partnership (CDRP). Wansbeck CDRP covers the parliamentary constituency of Wansbeck but respective boundaries may not be coterminous. Statistics are also available at basic command unit level but are not comparable for the years specified due to boundary changes in Northumbria police force. In the last three years, the number of violent offences recorded by the police are set out in the table.

It is not possible to determine from these National Statistics whether these offences are alcohol related. However a national estimate is provided by the British Crime Survey of the proportion of violent offences where the victim perceived the offender to be under the influence of alcohol. This is also detailed in the table.

	2002-03	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
England and Wales	834,927	955,752	1,035,046
Northumbria	25,171	24,[illegible]8	22,858
Wansbeck (CDRP)	1,005	1,060	1,032
Percentage under influence of drink for violent offences in England and Wales	44	50	48

Animal Rights Extremists

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations the Government has received on controls on animal rights extremists who target scientists, medical testing suppliers and their families. [23395]

Paul Goggins: Tackling harassment and intimidation by animal rights extremists is a key priority for the Government. We are committed to ensuring that vital and potentially life saving research is able to continue and will protect those who are involved in the use of animals in research either directly, indirectly through the supply chain or by association.

We have regular discussions with those who are targeted by animal rights extremists including representatives from industry and academia. This is a key part of the process of ensuring that we take the most effective action to address animal rights extremism.

Antisocial Behaviour

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list measures introduced to tackle antisocial behaviour since 1997; and how frequently each measure has been used in each region *(a)* in total and *(b)* per 100,000 population. [20943]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 put in place a range of measures to tackle antisocial behaviour and gave local agencies the tools they need to tackle antisocial behaviour on the ground.

Key measures in the Act include:

Powers to close premises where drugs are used unlawfully

Powers enabling social landlords to take action against antisocial tenants

A package of support and sanctions to enable parents to prevent and tackle antisocial behaviour among children

Powers to allow police officers to disperse groups of people who are causing nuisance or intimidating others

Powers for environmental health officers to close noisy premises

Powers to tackle graffiti and fly-posting.

The Housing Act 2004, introduced by ODPM, also contained important measures to enable landlords to tackle antisocial behaviour.

Data covering all measures are not available in the form requested. However, a one-off snapshot survey of the take up of antisocial behaviour powers was carried out in September 2004 and published in October 2004 in the "Together One-Year On" report. This survey of antisocial behaviour co-ordinators in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships provided an estimate of use of powers over a 12 month period. The results of the survey, based on responses from 239 antisocial behaviour co-ordinators, found that:

158 crack house closure orders were made between January and September 2004

418 dispersal orders were made between January and September 2004

824 parenting contracts and orders were made between October 2003 and September 2004

5,383 acceptable behaviour contracts were made between October 2000 and September 2004.

Data showing the number of ASBOs issued by all courts are shown in the table. Latest data are up to December 2004.

Total number of ASBOs issued up to 31 December 2004 as a proportion of the population as at 30 June 2004, by region

Regions	Total ASBOs issued[1]	Population as at 30 June 2004[2] (age 10 or over)	Rate per 100,000 population
North East	201	2,263,408	9
North West	1,168	6,031,248	19
Yorkshire and the Humber	615	4,449,206	14
East Midland	263	3,790,438	7
West Midlands	651	4,692,163	14
East	369	4,838,909	8
Greater London	448	6,503,148	7
South East	471	7,159,572	7
South West	297	4,488,637	7
Wales	166	2,615,071	6
England and Wales	4,649	46,831,800	10

1 As reported to the Home Office
2 Source: ONS.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Greater London in each month since April 1999, broken down by borough. [11948]

Hazel Blears: The readily available information is by quarter and is given in the table.

The number of ASBOs issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, where restrictions are imposed within Greater London local government authority areas, by period, 1 June 2000[1] to 31 December 2004 (latest available).

	Period							
		June to December 2000				2001		
Area	June	July-September	October-December	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Bexley	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Brent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Camden	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	1
City of London	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Croydon	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Ealing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—
Hackney	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Haringey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Harrow	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Havering	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hillingdon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hounslow	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Islington	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kingston-on-Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lambeth	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lewisham	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Merton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newham	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Richmond upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Southwark	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sutton	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Waltham Forest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greater London	—	10	9	4	4	4		1

	Period						
	2002				2003		
Area	January-March	April-June	July-September	October-December	January-March	April-June	July-September
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bexley	—	—	—	6	1	2	1

Area	Period 2002 January-March	2002 April-June	2002 July-September	2002 October-December	2003 January-March	2003 April-June	2003 July-September
Brent	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Bromley	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Camden	3	—	1	6	2	10	1
City of London	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Croydon	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Ealing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hackney	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haringey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Harrow	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Havering	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hillingdon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hounslow	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Islington	—	—	—	—	1	1	4
Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Kingston-on-Thames	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Lambeth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lewisham	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Merton	1	—	—	—	1	—	1
Newham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Richmond upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Southwark	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Sutton	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Tower Hamlets	—	1	—	—	1	—	1
Waltham Forest	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wandsworth	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Westminster	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Greater London	4	2	1	12	6	20	29

Area	2003 October-December	Period 2004 January-March	2004 April-June	2004 July-September	2004 October-December	Total Issued
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	1	1	2
Barnet	—	—	3	4	2	12
Bexley	—	—	3	1	—	16
Brent	—	1	—	2	2	12
Bromley	3	1	—	—	2	9
Camden	8	12	5	12	7	73
City of London	—	—	1	3	1	5
Croydon	4	—	6	—	1	14
Ealing	1	2	5	4	—	12
Enfield	1	2	1	—	—	4
Greenwich	3	4	—	1	—	11
Hackney	—	—	2	2	1	8
Hammersmith and Fulham	2	1	3	—	3	11
Haringey	—	—	4	5	8	17
Harrow	—	—	2	3	1	6
Havering	1	1	—	3	3	8
Hillingdon	—	—	3	5	4	12
Hounslow	2	3	6	4	4	22
Islington	1	—	1	1	3	12
Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough	—	1	3	3	1	9
Kingston-on-Thames	2	—	1	—	2	7
Lambeth	—	—	5	8	3	17
Lewisham	1	2	2	4	—	13
Merton	—	4	3	1	3	14
Newham	—	—	2	1	2	7
Richmond upon Thames	1	—	1	4	3	11
Southwark	4	1	—	5	1	12
Sutton	—	—	1	1	3	10
Tower Hamlets	—	3	—	4	7	17
Waltham Forest	—	2	—	5	5	12
Wandsworth	3	3	2	4	—	12
Westminster	3	2	5	6	7	31
Greater London	40	45	70	97	80	438

[1] Between 1 April 1999—31 May 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only by police force area (pfa). During this period nine ASBOs were issued, as reported, within Greater London pfa.

Note:

This local authority area table differs from criminal justice system area (cjsa) tables in that an issuing court can be outside the area in which the restrictions have been imposed.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders are *(a)* in force and *(b)* have been breached in Braintree district; and in how many cases subsequent offences have resulted in a custodial sentence. [21811]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) data are collected centrally on the number of orders issued. Information is not available on the number in force at any given time.

Data on convictions for breach of an ASBO and on the criminal histories of particular individuals are available at criminal justice system area level only.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role the head of the antisocial behaviour unit has in the *(a)* promotion and *(b)* execution of Government policy on (i) the prevention of binge drinking and (ii) the promotion of respectful behaviour and the discouragement of offensive or obscene language. [12876]

Hazel Blears: The Government have set out a clear strategy for reducing the health and crime and disorder problems associated with the misuse of alcohol, including through binge drinking. This includes new measures contained in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill to enable local authorities and the police to create alcohol disorder zones for targeted action; the introduction of a new Drinking Banning Order and a power for the police to impose 48-hour bans on pubs and clubs persistently selling alcohol to underage persons.

The Government are currently considering plans to take forward its work on tackling antisocial behaviour and the wider 'respect' agenda. This important work will be driven by a steering group of ministers, officials and practitioners to be chaired by myself, supported by an inter-departmental 'Respect' unit.

Bomb Hoaxes

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to police forces in England and Wales of dealing with hoax bomb threats has been since 7 July. [21033]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will to reply to the letter to him dated 6 September from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mrs. Saira Ahmed. [19510]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend for Manchester, Gorton on 1 November 2005.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* jailed for offences relating to the non-payment of council tax, including disregarding court orders to pay council tax, since May 1997. [17499]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information on those received into prison establishments by way of enforcement proceedings for council tax is shown in the table. The information on those fined is not recorded centrally.

Receptions into prison for non-payment of the community charge/council tax—England and Wales

	Number
1997	357
1998	194
1999	101
2000	41
2001	29
2002	21
2003	30
2004	26

Crime (Easington)

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of *(a)* violent crime, *(b)* sexual crime, *(c)* robbery and *(d)* car crime have taken place in Easington constituency in the last three years; and what the rates of (i) detection and (ii) prosecution have been in each category of crime. [20349]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the number of offences recorded for Easington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), and is given in the table.

Statistics on detections and prosecutions for Easington are not available.

Recorded crimes in the Easington crime and disorder reduction partnership area

Offence type	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Violence against the person	1,095	929	972
Sexual offences[1]	33	41	60
Robbery	51	32	26
Violent crime:	1,179	1,002	1,058
Theft of a motor vehicle	518	461	471
Theft from a vehicle	695	898	566
Vehicle crime:	1,213	1,359	1,037

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many process improvement projects were active in the Criminal Cases Review Commission during 2003–04; and what issues they addressed. [21728]

Fiona Mactaggart: During 2003–04 the Commission had six process improvement groups that were active which considered the following areas: case documentation, the Commission's relationship with applicants, external files, casework best practice, use of Investigations and Legal Advisers, and Statements of Reasons.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* complainants and *(b)* complaints there were to the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 2003–04; and how many cases were involved. [21793]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003–04 55 complainants made 67 complaints about 64 cases.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints to the Criminal Cases Review Commission in 2004–05 concerned case review actions or decisions; and how many resulted in a change to a case decision. [21794]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2004–05 the Commission received 69 complaints—of which 44 concerned case review actions or decisions. In four of them the Commission reopened the case.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Criminal Cases Review Commission received in grant aid in the year ending 31 March *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [21816]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003–04 the Criminal Cases Review Commission received grant aid of £7.8 million and in 2004–05 the figure was £5.75 million.

Criminal Injuries Compensation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications for compensation made on behalf of murder victims have been refused due to the victim having been judged to have provoked their attack under section 13d of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001 in each year of its operation; [21260]

(2) how many applications for compensation made on behalf of murder victims have been refused due to the victim having been judged to have provoked their attack under section 13d of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 1996, in each year of its operation. [21261]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information in the following table has been provided by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. The figures relate to cases finalised in the years in question.

CICS applications refused under para. 13d for provocation

	2001 scheme	*1996 scheme*
2000–01	n/a	83
2001–02	10	64
2002–03	58	52
2003–04	76	4
2004–05	113	11

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2001. [21264]

Fiona Mactaggart: We are aiming to issue, before the end of 2005, a consultation paper on victims' services. It is likely to include ideas about the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. There will be a three-month period for consultation.

Deaths in Custody

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange for a public notice to be inserted on the Prison Service website on the occasion of every death in custody. [22061]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no current plans for such notices to be placed on the Prison Service website.

Disclosure Powers

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to address the request from the Criminal Cases Review Commission for greater powers *(a)* to enforce disclosure on solicitors and others and *(b)* to interview witnesses overseas; and if he will make a statement. [17098]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) At present the powers of the Criminal Cases Review Commission to compel the production of material are limited to material held by public bodies. The proposal that the Commission should have powers to compel disclosure to solicitors and others raises the question of whether it's powers should extend to cover private bodies and individuals. It has been decided to take this forward as part of the Government's wider consideration of a possible new statutory third party disclosure scheme, as recommended by Sir Robin Auld in his Review of the Criminal Courts of England and Wales. An interdepartmental working party has recently been established to undertake this work, which is concerned with the disclosure of material by any person or body other than the defendant for the purposes of criminal investigations and proceedings.

(b) Agreement has been reached in principal to extend the powers of the Criminal Cases Review Commission to seek assistance from foreign authorities by amending the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003. The Home Secretary is waiting for a suitable legislative vehicle in which to include the amendment to bring about this change.

Dr. David Kelly

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) on what date the police inquiry into the death of Dr. David Kelly was closed; [12847]

(2) on what date the police investigation into the death of Dr. David Kelly was closed. [23157]

Hazel Blears: Thames Valley police were investigating the death of Dr. David Kelly on behalf of the Coroner for Oxfordshire. The Coroner declared on 16 March 2004 that he accepted Lord Hutton's conclusion and that he would not re-open the Inquest.

Drug-related Offending (Braintree)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests for suspected drug-related offences have been made in the Braintree constituency during the last five years. [21812]

Hazel Blears: Data on number of arrests for suspected drug-related offences are not collated in the format requested.

Statistics for arrests for drug offences, such as possession of drugs or possession with intent to supply, are available by police force area. However, it is known that many other crimes may be drug-related, such as burglary or shoplifting, which are often carried out in order to obtain drugs. Information on the number of

arrests for some of these offence types is also only available by police force area. Details of both can be found in the annual publication 'Home Office Statistical Bulletin, Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operations of Certain Police Powers under PACE' which is published on the Home Office website.

The total number of persons arrested for drug offences and other acquisitive offences, a significant proportion of which are likely to be drug-related, in the Essex police force area since 2000 is shown in the following table.

Number of persons arrested for notifiable offences by offence type, Essex police force area

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Drug offences	2,108	1,643	1,850	1,585
Robbery	378	745	432	560
Burglary	2,002	1,678	1,839	1,976
Theft and handling stolen goods	9,815	8,486	8,469	8,260
Fraud and forgery	780	1,671	811	1,112

Electronic Tagging

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring his Department carries out of contractors required to regulate offenders' electronic tagging; and what contractual obligations the contractors have to report curfew breaches by offenders wearing such tags. [20334]

Fiona Mactaggart: The electronic monitoring contracts in England and Wales are monitored by a dedicated team within the Home Office National Offender Management Service. The two companies with responsibility for delivering electronic monitoring are required to meet a number of service standards. Performance is rigorously monitored and robustly enforced, with financial deductions for underperformance.

In respect of breach, the service provider is required to notify the court and secure a hearing date within three working days. Where other agencies have enforcement responsibility there are separate reporting requirements.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders wearing electronic tags were identified as being in breach of curfew orders in the last year for which figures are available. [20336]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003, the latest year for which figures are available, 9,599 offenders were sentenced to a curfew order, of which 1,605 were found by the courts to be in breach.

A very small proportion of this total would have been monitored by alternative means to electronic tagging, as it was not a statutory requirement under the legislation in place at that time. Electronic monitoring must now be used for all adult curfew requirements imposed by the court since the introduction of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 on 4 April 2005.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of performance by contractors in reporting curfew breaches by offenders wearing electronic tags. [20337]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office has recently reviewed the timeliness of reporting curfew violations to other agencies, and they are working with the service providers to improve performance in this area. In the vast majority of cases curfew violations are reported within the agreed time scales.

Equitorial Guinea (Attempted Coup)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the UK police are assisting investigations into the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea; and if he will make a statement. [12974]

Hazel Blears: No requests have been made to the Home Office for UK police to assist in this matter.

Firearms

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on tackling the possession of firearms among young males. [21062]

Hazel Blears: The Government's approach to dealing with this problem focuses on three main areas. First the legislative framework where we have taken steps to strengthen the laws governing the possession of firearms which are already among the toughest in the world. We have introduced a mandatory five year minimum sentence for anyone convicted of possession of an illegal firearm, made it an offence to carry an imitation or air gun in public without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, banned the sale, manufacture and import of guns that use self contained gas cartridge systems, and strengthened the law on airguns. The Violent Crime Reduction Bill builds on these measures.

Secondly, we have worked closely with law enforcement agencies to strengthen enforcement action.

Thirdly, we recognise the key part played by communities in addressing the wider issue of this underlying gun culture. We have put £2 million from recycled criminal assets into anti-gun crime projects across the country this year. In addition, the Connected Fund launched last year, provides grants to small voluntary groups working on gun crime, knife crime and gang-related issues. This has proved very successful, supporting over 150 community groups across the country to date.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many minors were charged with possession of a firearm in the last period for which figures are available. [21545]

Hazel Blears: Statistics of persons charged with crimes are not collected centrally.

Historical Sex Abuse Cases

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalties are available for journalists who report prejudicial material which may damage an investigation into historical sex abuse; and on how many occasions in the last 10 years these penalties have been used. [20178]

Fiona Mactaggart: Under the Contempt of Court Act 1981, it is a contempt once legal proceedings are active to publish material that creates a substantial risk that the course of justice in those proceedings will be seriously impeded or prejudiced. This is regardless of whether there is any intent.

The maximum term of committal is two years, and/or a fine; community penalties are not available. Statistics on the use of these penalties are not available. Persons proceeded against for offences under the Contempt of Court Act 1981 cannot be separately identified on the Home Office court proceedings database.

Illegal Immigrants (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employers in Kettering constituency have been prosecuted for employing illegal immigrants in each year since 1997. [22235]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* There are no recorded prosecutions in the Kettering Petty Sessions for offences by employers under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 for the periods in question.

Immigrant Labour

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers in the UK have permission to work; and what proportion of the total number of asylum seekers they represent. [18750]

Mr. McNulty: Between 1986 and 2002 asylum seekers could request permission to work in certain circumstances. That concession was abolished on 23 July 2002. Asylum seekers are not now allowed to work as a matter of routine although, with the introduction of the EU Directive on Reception Conditions for Asylum Seekers an asylum seeker can seek permission to work if their claim for asylum remains outstanding for longer than 12 months without an initial decision being made on it, providing the reason for the delay cannot be attributed to them. Information on the number of asylum seekers given permission to work under the previous concession or as a result of the EU directive is not available centrally and could be obtained only by investigating individual case records.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to supply Mr. T. M. of Aylesbury (ref. M1194191; CTS ref. M20613/5) with formal documentation to confirm the grant to him of indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom. [22429]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* The case of Mr. T. M. of Aylesbury is being treated as a priority. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate will grant him indefinite leave to remain when certain documents that were requested from Mr. T. M. on the 25 October have been received.

Licensing Hours

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of violent assaults in England and Wales were attributed to alcohol abuse in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [18556]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office does not hold data on violent assaults attributable to alcohol abuse (ie involving people with problems with alcohol).

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has conducted into the impact of extended licensing hours on the allocation of police resources; and if he will make a statement. [18558]

Hazel Blears: Under the outgoing licensing law, the police are annually engaged in over 1.6 million administrative licensing processes which will be streamlined to around 170,000 under the Licensing Act 2003 resulting in a saving of up to £15 million annually. The Act will also give the police further powers to tackle alcohol related disorder, for instance through allowing temporary or permanent reductions in trading hours.

Missing Children

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to establish the whereabouts of the African and Caribbean boys between the ages of four and seven who were recently identified as having gone missing from London schools over a three-month period; and what steps have been taken to encourage the Department for Education and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate to work more closely together to improve systems of record keeping. [19680]

Hazel Blears: Initial inquiries made by Metropolitan Police Officers investigating the 'Adam' murder found that a number of African boys had not returned to school following the summer break in 2001. Following their further investigations, I understand from the Metropolitan Police Service that in every case there were legitimate reasons for the boys not returning to school and none of the boys reported as missing is unaccounted for.

There has been considerable media speculation that these children were trafficked for the purpose of ritual abuse. There is no evidence that any of them has come to any harm or been involved in ritualistic practices and there were no allegations from either the families or schools that the welfare of these children was at risk. The Metropolitan police have made it clear that they believe this type of crime to be extremely rare, and that there is no evidence to suggest that any children are at risk.

The Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the police service are continuing to work together to reinforce local procedures to ensure that any children at risk might be identified. Every Child Matters: Change for Children, published by the Department for Education and Skills on 1 December 2004, iterates the Government's expectation that by

December 2005 every local authority should have systematic arrangements in place to identify children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* hit and run accidents, *(b)* hit and run accidents in which the driver did not have insurance and *(c)* hit and run accidents for which drivers were taken to court and (i) fined, (ii) imprisoned and (iii) acquitted there were in (A) Southend, (B) Essex, (C) the Metropolitan police area of London and (D) England and Wales in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and what percentage of these fines remain unpaid. [20630]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the number of drivers without insurance who are involved in hit and run accidents is not collected centrally.

Available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database and given in Tables A—D2 show the number of offences proceeded against by result for the offence of 'failing to stop after an accident' under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s. 170 (4) from 1999 to 2003 (latest available). 2004 data will be available early in 2006.

Table E, provided by the Department for Transport, details data for those accidents classified as hit and run.

Fines are collected by the courts and the current payment rate for fines in general is around 80 per cent.

Table A: Court proceedings for accident offences[1] within Southend-on-Sea magistrates court by result, 1999–2000

				Number of offences	
	Total proceedings	*Charges withdrawn/dismissed[2]*	*Total findings of guilt*	*Immediate custody[3]*	*Fine*
1999	250	38	164	10	95
2000	329	105	198	12	107
2001	286	76	190	8	100
2002	309	100	184	13	90
2003	319	84	215	10	105

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)

[2] Includes cases under Magistrates Courts Act 1980 s9 (when court, after hearing the evidence, decide the defendant is not guilty).

[3] Includes sentences of Secure Training Order, Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table B1: Proceedings at magistrates courts for accident offences[1] dealt with by Essex police by result, 1999–2000

				Number of offences	
	Total proceedings	*Charges withdrawn/dismissed[2]*	*Total findings of guilt*	*Immediate custody[3]*	*Fine*
1999	998	326	594	30	366
2000	1,103	416	605	24	360
2001	1,185	380	710	36	413
2002	1,214	385	731	34	379
2003	1,309	421	787	49	403

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)

[2] Includes cases under Magistrates Courts Act 1980 s9 (when court, after hearing the evidence, decide the defendant is not guilty).

[3] Includes sentences of Secure Training Order, Detention & Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table B2: Proceedings at the Crown court for accident offences[1] dealt with by Essex police by result, 1999–2000

				Number of offences	
	Total proceedings for trial	*Acquitted*	*Total findings of guilt*	*Immediate custody[2]*	*Fine*
1999	6	5	1	—	—
2000	8	4	4	—	—
2001	6	2	2	—	—
2002	6	6	—	—	—
2003	27	10	17	—	4

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)

[2] Includes sentences of Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table C1: Proceedings at magistrates courts for accident offences[1] dealt with by the Metropolitan police by result, 1999–2000

				Number of offences	
	Total proceedings	*Charges withdrawn/dismissed[2]*	*Total findings of guilt*	*Immediate custody[3]*	*Fine*
1999	2,544	1,029	1,293	44	891
2000	2,212	884	1,115	36	737
2001	1,926	827	960	39	577
2002	1,919	768	986	33	603
2003	1,838	746	957	40	535

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)

[2] Includes cases under Magistrates Courts Act 1980 s9 (when court, after hearing the evidence, decide the defendant is not guilty).

[3] Includes sentences of Secure Training Order, Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table C2: Proceedings at the Crown court for accident offences[1] with by the Metropolitan police by result, 1999–2000

	Total proceedings for trial	Acquitted	Total findings of guilt	Number of offences: Immediate custody [2]	Fine
1999	32	11	19	—	2
2000	28	5	23	13	2
2001	15	5	9	—	—
2002	34	12	19	3	3
2003	40	12	28	5	5

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)
[2] Includes sentences of Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table D1: Proceedings at magistrates courts for accident offences[1] within England and Wales by result, 1999–2000

	Total proceedings	Charges withdrawn/dismissed [2]	Total findings of guilt	Number of offences: Immediate custody [3]	Fine
1999	27,259	8,956	16,208	562	9,503
2000	26,692	9,211	15,512	518	8,917
2001	28,105	10,150	15,624	518	8,573
2002	28,394	10,059	15,912	513	8,320
2003	29,549	10,290	16,691	540	8,813

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)
[2] Includes cases under Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 s9 (when court, after hearing the evidence, decide the defendant is not guilty).
[3] Includes sentences of Secure Training Order, Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Table D2: Proceedings at the Crown court for accident offences[1] within England and Wales by result, 1999–2000

	Total proceedings for trial	Acquitted	Total findings of guilt	Number of offences: Immediate custody [2]	Fine
1999	321	98	220	9	17
2000	348	62	284	51	19
2001	342	63	274	25	18
2002	465	84	372	29	22
2003	558	115	400	27	27

[1] Aiding, abetting, causing or permitting accident offences under the RTA88 s. 170(4)
[2] Includes sentences of Detention and Training Order, Young Offender Institution and Unsuspended sentence of imprisonment.

Source:
RDS-OCJR (PQM&SDC151–05)

Table E: Hit and run accidents by area and severity: 1999–2004

	Year of accident: 1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Local authority (district): Southend-on-Sea						
Fatal	0	1	1	1	0	0
Serious	7	9	10	12	11	10
Slight	67	67	77	74	89	91
Total	74	77	88	87	100	101
County: Essex						
Fatal	1	5	4	3	2	2
Serious	49	72	75	93	126	86
Slight	507	571	602	730	683	683
Total	557	648	681	826	811	771
Police force code: Metropolitan police						
Fatal	26	15	27	30	29	20
Serious	376	507	629	680	617	470
Slight	3,104	3,718	4,691	5,121	4,732	3,870
Total	3,506	4,240	5,347	5,831	5,378	4,360
Country: England and Wales						
Fatal	131	100	126	148	137	131
Serious	1,936	2,184	2,275	2,600	2,537	2,091
Slight	17,736	20,160	22,448	23,734	23,484	21,127
Total	19,803	22,444	24,849	26,482	26,158	23,349

Source:
Department for Transport.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he plans to ensure that the introduction of the National Offender Management Service will achieve its aims of reducing reoffending and increasing public confidence. [16480]

Fiona Mactaggart: The introduction of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is a major change initiative. The change programme creates the capability to reduce reoffending by:

introducing an offender management model to ensure effective end-to-end management of offenders from the beginning to the end of their sentence, both in custody and the community;

providing high quality and innovative offender management and interventions services for offenders through a mixed economy of public, private and voluntary sector providers; and

improvements in IT.

Successful delivery is being assured by the adoption of best practice programme management arrangements, including developing and tracking key indicators of delivery—as stated in the NOMS corporate plan.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the performance of the National Offender Management Service. [16986]

Fiona Mactaggart: An assessment of progress against Performance Targets as set out in the National Offender Management Service Business Plan is made on a regular basis. We are currently on course to meet most of these. Additionally, a bi-annual assessment of progress against Business Plan milestones is made; this is due later this month.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total expenditure on the National Offender Management Service was up to the end of September. [19222]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The total expenditure on the National Offender Management Service for the current financial year, up to the end of September, is £1,912,966,000 resource and £136,995,000 capital. The figures for the month of September are provisional.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the business case for the National Offender Management Service will be published; and if he will make a statement. [22672]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) strategic business case was published on the NOMS website:

www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk on 20 October.

The case for the establishment of NOMS was outlined in 'Managing Offenders Reducing Crime'. A separate detailed business case has taken time to prepare as NOMS is a complex and wide-ranging programme. The business case makes a detailed strategic case for change.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date the relevant Minister agreed the business case for the National Offender Management Service. [23268]

Fiona Mactaggart: Ministers have supported the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in the development of the strategic business case and approved it prior to its publication. The NOMS strategic business case was published on the NOMS website www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk on 20 October.

The case for the establishment of NOMS was outlined in 'Managing Offenders Reducing Crime'. A separate detailed business case has taken time to prepare as NOMS is a complex and wide-ranging programme. The business case makes a detailed strategic case for change.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when *(a)* the business case and *(b)* gateway reviews in respect of a contestability within the National Offender Management Service will be published; and if he will place a copy in the Library when it is available. [23541]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding Answer 31 October 2005]:* We have no plans to publish the gateway reviews of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) programme that have taken place. The strategic business case was published on the NOMS website (www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk) on 20 October 2005. Since its publication was electronic, no copies have been placed in the Library.

Payroll Giving Grants Programme

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the information on the take up of the payroll giving grants programme will be available; and in what format it will be published. [21860]

Paul Goggins: The Institute of Fundraising will write to all MPs in January 2006 with a breakdown of the take up of payroll giving by constituency, copies of which will be placed in the Library.

Police

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many resignations and retirements of police officers from the Northamptonshire police there have been in each year since 1997. [22234]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Figures for the number of voluntary resignations by police officers in Northamptonshire are provided in the table. Figures for the numbers of ordinary and medical retirements by police officers in Northamptonshire are also provided in the table.

Total number of police officer voluntary resignations in Northamptonshire, 1997 to 2005

As at 31 March each year:	*Voluntary resignations*
1997	13
1998	8
1999	23
2000	9
2001	10
2002	7
2003	11
2004	26
2005	29

Total number of police officer retirements in Northamptonshire, 1997 to 2005

As at 31 March each year:	*Ordinary retirements*	*Medical retirements*	*Total retirements*
1997	10	14	24
1998	26	18	44
1999	16	17	33
2000	21	5	26
2001	25	8	33
2002	21	6	27
2003	30	3	33
2004	25	3	28
2005	42	3	45

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the effective rate of employer contributions is to final salary pension schemes in the public sector for police officers. [21571]

Hazel Blears: The police pension scheme is financed on a pay-as-you-go basis, which means that police forces pay the pensions of their former officers directly out of their operating account. Police forces do not pay employer contributions as such, but it is estimated that the notional employer contribution rate for the current Police Pension Scheme is 26.1 per cent.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* police sergeants there were on 1 January (i) 2002, (ii) 2003, (iii) 2004 and (iv) 2005, broken down by (A) London borough and (B) police authority; [17009]

(2) how many police community support officers there were on 1January *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005, broken down by (i) London borough and (ii) police authority. [17010]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of constables and sergeants for each police force in England and Wales for 31 March of each year requested (which is the nearest available date to January) is set out in Table A. Community Support Officers were introduced during 2002–03 and the first available information on their number is for 31 March 2003.

Table B sets out the total number of police officers and Community Support Officers for each London Borough Operational Command Unit (OCU). The data shows the total number of officers in each OCU: a breakdown by rank is not collected. Information on the number of Community Support Officers in London OCUs has only been collected since March 2005. In addition to London borough deployment, 456 CSOs are assigned to the Metropolitan Police Transport OCU, 40 to the Royal Parks OCU and 45 to SO18 (aviation security).

Table A: Total strength for police constables, sergeants and police community support officers (PCSO)[1] by police force area, 31 March 2002 to 31 March 2005

	Strength as at March:						
	2002[2]			2003[2]			
Police force	*Constable*	*Sergeant*	*Force strength*	*Constable*	*Sergeant*	*Force strength*	*PCSO*
Avon and Somerset	2,428	457	3,096	2,454	481	3,149	0
Bedfordshire	851	132	1,069	896	136	1,106	0
Cambridgeshire	1,057	206	1,362	1,106	192	1,384	6
Cheshire	1,601	310	2,059	1,674	312	2,119	2
Cleveland	1,150	205	1,461	1,261	222	1,582	37
Cumbria	858	164	1,100	912	167	1,140	0
Derbyshire	1,440	274	1,848	1,578	289	2,003	0
Devon and Cornwall	2,399	431	3,053	2,529	461	3,202	19
Dorset	1,067	208	1,381	1,108	208	1,416	6
Durham	1,277	215	1,614	1,323	219	1,651	10
Essex	2,301	433	2,946	2,382	415	2,989	10
Gloucestershire	929	161	1,183	963	178	1,227	0
Greater Manchester	5,744	954	7,217	5,894	980	7,343	160
Hampshire	2,674	552	3,480	2,887	570	3,668	0
Hertfordshire	1,429	247	1,825	1,609	224	1,957	14
Humberside	1,620	289	2,058	1,680	288	2,105	0
Kent	2,664	470	3,355	2,782	472	3,487	0
Lancashire	2,555	513	3,304	2,610	521	3,339	77
Leicestershire	1,674	294	2,100	1,761	254	2,114	28
Lincolnshire	916	184	1,198	954	182	1,221	29
London, City of	591	100	764	622	108	808	0
Merseyside	3,273	567	4,125	3,278	548	4,099	40
Metropolitan Police	20,209	4,099	26,223	21,955	4213	27,984	513
Norfolk	1,147	204	1,468	1,176	215	1,499	12
Northamptonshire	958	173	1,214	979	167	1,210	12
Northumbria	3,116	539	3,929	3,190	549	3,943	0
North Yorkshire	1,091	226	1,417	1,129	227	1,444	0
Nottinghamshire	1,819	347	2,330	1,921	345	2,411	10
South Yorkshire	2,446	491	3,199	2447	489	3,183	14
Staffordshire	1,639	348	2,133	1,736	355	2,202	0
Suffolk	959	159	1,203	997	174	1,253	0
Surrey	1,569	286	1,992	1,525	267	1,906	21
Sussex	2,209	442	2,893	2,354	427	2,989	22
Thames Valley	2,930	545	3,762	3,097	521	3,833	0
Warwickshire	772	118	969	785	134	997	11
West Mercia	1,546	322	2,018	1,788	320	2,256	8
West Midlands	6,200	1,047	7,618	6,379	1,030	7,751	0
West Yorkshire	3,879	641	4,889	4,020	644	5,029	70
Wiltshire	897	167	1,157	908	161	1,158	15
Dyfed-Powys	871	175	1,132	880	184	1,149	0
Gwent	1,040	204	1,333	1,054	203	1,341	30
North Wales	1,159	230	1,506	1,209	229	1,539	0
South Wales	2,535	448	3,222	2,574	452	3,239	0
Total of 43 forces	99,487	18,574	127,267	104,363	18,731	131,426	1,176

Police force	Strength as at March: 2004 [2] Constable	Sergeant	Force strength	PCSO	2005 Constable	Sergeant	Force strength	PCSO
Avon and Somerset	2,686	490	3,401	45	2,663	497	3,384	139
Bedfordshire	985	130	1,181	12	1,002	143	1,215	40
Cambridgeshire	1,131	184	1,400	57	1,085	224	1,402	86
Cheshire	1,710	318	2,177	50	1,692	326	2,186	52
Cleveland	1,349	232	1,687	77	1,327	246	1,676	75
Cumbria	1,000	153	1,222	0	1,002	168	1,232	17
Derbyshire	1,659	291	2,070	0	1,630	307	2,070	43
Devon and Cornwall	2,600	477	3,283	51	2,675	491	3,369	74
Dorset	1,129	212	1,433	8	1,142	216	1,450	47
Durham	1,349	224	1,685	28	1,373	235	1,718	69
Essex	2,483	420	3,098	86	2,555	438	3,190	179
Gloucestershire	1,008	183	1,284	54	1,026	170	1,291	72
Greater Manchester	6,573	1,018	8,042	173	6,513	1045	8,041	269
Hampshire	2,936	586	3,706	0	2,929	595	3,725	26
Hertfordshire	1,771	215	2,086	46	1,784	237	2,104	98
Humberside	1,767	298	2,213	—	1,771	307	2,230	20
Kent	2,915	468	3,576	59	2,899	486	3,586	105
Lancashire	2,792	535	3,550	110	2,775	562	3,551	161
Leicestershire	1,872	285	2,277	41	1,896	268	2,283	103
Lincolnshire	962	179	1,228	38	962	175	1,221	75
London, City of	643	128	853	0	663	127	876	14
Merseyside	3,270	597	4,122	72	3,474	576	4,317	170
Metropolitan Police	23,548	4,236	29,735	1,463	23,694	4,963	30,710	2,147
Norfolk	1,179	223	1,510	33	1,192	247	1,544	68
Northamptonshire	998	183	1,239	10	1,003	191	1,267	37
Northumbria	3,238	548	4,040	51	3,236	564	4,048	126
North Yorkshire	1,175	241	1,529	52	1,195	246	1,543	75
Nottinghamshire	1,983	348	2,484	56	1,944	393	2,502	108
South Yorkshire	2,576	471	3,279	59	2,563	480	3,265	124
Staffordshire	1,810	337	2,266	7	1,824	340	2,280	63
Suffolk	1,047	176	1,304	15	1,051	169	1,313	34
Surrey	1,531	273	1,913	56	1,464	323	1,915	115
Sussex	2,400	433	3,039	83	2,326	499	3,044	228
Thames Valley	3,321	502	4,034	7	3,356	544	4,114	98
Warwickshire	794	133	1,008	25	798	130	1,011	56
West Mercia	1,869	334	2,355	57	1,833	373	2,367	81
West Midlands	6,572	991	7,887	39	6,645	1,051	8,056	219
West Yorkshire	4,270	660	5,275	265	4,552	713	5,631	394
Wiltshire	977	159	1,217	23	971	156	1,222	41
Dyfed-Powys	898	188	1,160	5	904	186	1,174	25
Gwent	1,072	213	1,372	45	1,136	208	1,438	77
North Wales	1,268	242	1,603	—	1,263	270	1,652	59
South Wales	2,603	465	3,279	59	2,601	467	3,281	107
Total of 43 forces	109,718	18,979	137,105	3,418	110,392	20,350	139,495	6,214

[1] Police community Support Officer (PCSO) strength is only available from 31 March 2003. There may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items.

[2] Some forces have revised their figures and totals may not agree with those previously published.

Table B—London borough police officer [1] and community support officer strength

London Borough Operational Command Unit	Police officers As at 31 March: 2002	2003	2004	2005	[2]CSO
Barking and Dagenham	301	360	384	419	36
Barnet	514	522	541	561	48
Bexley	316	315	338	383	49
Brent	581	619	683	679	31
Bromley and Orpington	432	417	459	489	52
Camden	699	719	794	850	48
Croydon	592	624	659	692	49
Ealing	640	652	697	686	44
Enfield	487	490	538	575	44
Greenwich	572	604	583	605	43
Hackney	648	673	766	789	51
Hammersmith and Fulham	509	513	516	526	30
Haringey	555	633	682	683	40
Harrow	290	302	333	342	36
Havering	319	340	343	383	41
Hillingdon	408	458	484	498	56
Hounslow	435	467	472	510	42
Islington	566	623	680	683	39
Kensington and Chelsea	535	528	575	562	67
Kingston-upon-Thames	266	272	275	298	26
Lambeth	882	968	941	984	76
Lewisham	595	571	625	646	42
Merton	284	304	339	352	31
Newham	612	692	781	782	77

Table B—London borough police officer [1] and community support officer strength

London Borough Operational Command Unit	Police officers As at 31 March 2002	2003	2004	2005	[2]CSO
Redbridge	397	393	440	459	41
Richmond-upon-Thames	277	284	285	287	39
Southwark	796	838	869	891	43
Sutton	255	266	280	291	32
Tower Hamlets	562	686	760	761	66
Waltham Forest	456	486	533	546	39
Wandsworth	563	557	612	582	46
Westminster, City of	1,508	1,565	1,637	1,617	272

[1] Allocation of police officers to each London borough is substantially determined by the Metropolitan Police Service through the application of the force's resource allocation formula.
[2] CSO = Community Support Officer

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will rank police forces according to percentage of total strength that has been civilianised since 1995. [21454]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The information requested is not collected. It is for chief officers of police and their police authorities to determine the mix of staff employed by a police force. The police service efficiency strategy expects the service to work towards increasing the amount of police officer time spent on front-line policing to around 72 per cent. by March 2008, from nearly 64 per cent. in March 2004. This equates to an extra 12,000 police officers being freed up from back-office tasks over the next three years.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many resignations from the police there have been in each year since 1997. [21847]

Hazel Blears: Figures for the numbers of voluntary resignations by both police officers and police staff are provided in the table. Increasing numbers of resignations are to be expected given the record growth in police service personnel numbers over the last five years.

Total number of voluntary resignations from police forces (1997–2005)

As at 31 March	Police officers	Police staff
1997	748	3,669
1998	926	4,075
1999	1,189	4,899
2000	1,235	4,404
2001	1,468	4,935
2002	1,674	4,785
2003[1]	1,969	4,986
2004	2,187	5,560
2005[1]	2,073	6,090

[1] Totals exclude one force.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of *(a)* the compatibility of police computer systems and *(b)* the implications of computer system compatibility for force restructuring. [21888]

Hazel Blears: The compatibility of police computer systems within each force is the responsibility of the chief constable and his police authority. National systems such as the police national computer operated op behalf of the service by the Police Information Technology Organisation are accessible by all forces.

The IMPACT programme will provide business processes and systems which allow police forces to share and link operationally relevant information regardless of artificial boundaries between forces and systems. As part of developing options for change on restructuring, police forces/authorities are expected to consider and assess computer system compatibility across forces within their region.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of the age profile of Lancashire police on recruitment requirements for the force. [11645]

Hazel Blears: Individual forces carry out their own age profiling with a view to future recruitment needs.

Lancashire constabulary monitors the effect of the age profile of the organisation on the recruitment requirements for the force on a monthly basis. They currently have projections until 2011.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which police stations have held convicted prisoners for one night or more after sentencing in the past six months; and for those in respect of which proceedings have been completed *(a)* how many were so held, *(b)* what their sentence was and *(c)* for what crime they were convicted in each case; [20477]

(2) how many convicted prisoners have been held in police cells for one night or more after sentencing in the past six months. [20478]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* Since 1 April 2005 there has been a total of 645 prisoners held overnight in police accommodation. This includes both convicted and unconvicted prisoners. This is not a routine use and is an emergency measure only.

Details of police stations, whether proceedings have been completed, prisoner status, sentence and offence are not recorded centrally by the National Offender Management Service and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the starting salary of a new police officer was for each police force area in each of the last three years. [14018]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 20 July 2005]:* Starting pay for police constables in the last three years is set out in the table.

In addition to their pay, officers in the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police receive a London allowance of £4,338 for officers recruited on or after one September 1994 and who are not in receipt of a housing allowance. Officers in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey and Thames Valley who were recruited on or after 1 September and who are not in receipt of a housing allowance receive a South East allowance of £2,000 a year. Qualifying officers in Bedfordshire, Hampshire and Sussex receive a South East allowance of £1,000 a year.

£

	Starting pay in Home Department police forces outside of London	*Starting pay in the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police*[1]
September 2002	18,264	20,091
April 2003	18,666	20,493
July 2003	18,666	20,547
September 2003	19,227	21,108
July 2004	19,227	21,165
September 2004	19,803	21,741

[1] The pay of constables in the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police is increased by London weighting.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he gives to police authorities on the purchase and hire of road vehicles. [20631]

Hazel Blears: The Government are determined to ensure that the police have adequate resources to play their key part in tackling crime and disorder and improving community safety.

Planning and management of police resources locally, including use of vehicles, are matters for each police authority and chief officer.

We have worked with the police service to develop national frameworks for the purchase of vehicles, under which forces are offered significant discounts on manufacturers' prices. These have been in place since 1992 and are regularly re-tendered. The arrangements are strongly encouraged by the Association of Chief Police Officers and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary. The most recent version (spring 2005) have been designed to assist forces in rationalising the variety of models in use, to encourage standardisation and deliver further increases in value for money.

Prisons

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has taken to prevent drug abuse in prisons among *(a)* staff and *(b)* inmates; and if he will make a statement. [16549]

Fiona Mactaggart: A comprehensive series of measures is in place to reduce the misuse of drugs by prisoners including:

Supply Reduction

measures to tackle visitors who attempt to smuggle drugs;

use of drug dogs;

CCTV in visits areas;

working with the police;

searching;

use of Supply Reduction Good Practice Guide; and

mandatory and voluntary drug testing programmes.

Demand Reduction

Clinical Management of Substance;

Misuse;

Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Through-care services; and

Drug Treatment Programmes.

All staff are required to report fit for duty. This includes not being unfit through either alcohol or drug misuse. Failure to meet this standard may result in disciplinary action. Staff are also liable to be searched when reporting for duty.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that educational records are transferred effectively across the prison estate. [16960]

Fiona Mactaggart: Successful data transfer/exchange is an urgent priority as part of the implementation of the new offender learning and skills service. The three development regions (north-east, north-west, south-west) which went live in August 2005 have implemented the Learning and Skills Council's Individual Learner Record arrangements, whereby centrally held records are available to education providers involved in delivering offender learning services, but we regard this as only a partial solution.

The longer term solution will be inclusion of learning records (alongside all other data relating to the offender) on the National Offender Management Service's NOMIS database.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners took part in higher educational courses in prisons in each year since 2000, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* gender and *(c)* ethnicity. [16962]

Fiona Mactaggart: These data would be available only at disproportionate cost.

The Department for Education and Skills provides support funding for Open University Openings access courses, Open University undergraduate course modules and contributions to tutorial costs. The table shows the number of places funded (figures are available centrally only from 2002).

OU courses

	Openings	*Undergraduate*	*Total*
2002–03	0	450	450
2003–04	200	650	850
2004–05	250	850	1,100
2005–06	250	1,050	[1]1,300

[1] planned

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations of the Independent Monitoring Board on diverting mentally ill and addicted prisoners in young offenders institutions to appropriate care and treatment. [16967]

Fiona Mactaggart: All prisoners undergo health screening, which will identify mental health problems and addictions, on reception into prison. They will then be referred on for appropriate interventions. Measures in place to ensure that prisoners who need in-patient

treatment for mental disorder are transferred to hospital quickly are now being augmented through a two year project which will establish a national waiting time for such transfers along with referral guidelines.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the provision of condoms in prisons and young offenders' institutions. [17006]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prison doctors were advised in 1995 that they should make condoms available to individual prisoners, on application, if in their clinical judgment, there is a risk of transmission of HIV infection during sexual activity. The Prison Service is planning to issue, in early 2006, revised guidance and instructions which aim to clarify the policy on condoms so that it can be applied more evenly across the prison estate.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the quantity of drugs taken into prisons in the North East region by *(a)* prisoners, *(b)* visitors, *(c)* prison officers and *(d)* other means in each of the last 10 years. [17192]

Fiona Mactaggart: As I stated in my reply to a question by the hon. Member for North-West Norfolk (Mr. Bellingham) on 10 October, we do not collect comprehensive information on quantities centrally.

The Mandatory Drug Testing programme, which is the principle means of measuring drug misuse in prisons, shows that in the North East the percentage of positive tests has reduced from 32.9 per cent. in 1996–97 to 10 per cent. in 2005–06 (August 2005).

The Home Office recently commissioned a substantial piece of research that identifies patterns of drug use and supply routes. The six main routes identified were social visits, mail, new receptions, prison staff, over the perimeter and reception after court visits. Measures are already in place to target these routes and the report will inform the further development of supply reduction strategies.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people whose family homes are in South Tyneside are *(a)* on remand and *(b)* convicted prisoners in a prison more than 50 miles from their family home. [17196]

Fiona Mactaggart: As at 31 June 2005, the latest date for which figures are available, *(a)* no remand and *(b)* 44 convicted prisoners whose home area was recorded as South Tyneside were held in prisons more than 50 miles from their home.

Note:

Home address details are not held for all prisoners. Where an individual prisoner's home address is not recorded, the prisoner's committal, remand, convicting or sentencing court is used.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of violent incidents in prisons have occurred in overcrowded cells in each of the last three years for which records are available. [17791]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data on the number of violent incidents in overcrowded cells are not available and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new *(a)* prison cells and *(b)* prison places are planned to be created in each of the next five years. [17792]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is an ongoing building programme to increase operational capacity to 79,100 by June 2006 and to 80,400 by 2007.

We continue to investigate options for providing further increases in capacity.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment is made of prisoners in young offenders institutions to ensure that they are not allocated a cell shared with a potentially hostile inmate. [17825]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Security Framework, the core security document for the Prison Service, requires that prisoners are risk assessed on reception and induction and are accommodated in line with a number of risk assessments. This includes the reception health screening process, which incorporates an assessment of mental health, and a cell-sharing risk assessment. The latter must be completed for every new prisoner received into custody on the first night of reception before allocation to his/her cell. Any prisoner identified as being at high or medium risk of harming others has a risk minimisation plan, which, along with the cell-sharing risk assessment, is re-consulted every time that a prisoner moves location within the prison or to another prison.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prison suicides in 2005 involved prisoners in overcrowded cells. [17920]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2005 to date (to 20 October), of the 64 apparent self-inflicted deaths in prisons in England and Wales, 19 (30 per cent.) followed self-harm incidents that occurred in double cells and 45 (70 per cent.) in single cells. 17 of the 19 prisoners who died following self-harm incidents in double cells were being held in prisons that were, in the month of the prisoner's death, operating over their Certified Normal Accommodation (the un-crowded capacity of an establishment after adjusting for accommodation out of use). However, records collated centrally do not indicate whether these 17 prisoners were accommodated in cells certified for one.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners he estimates were HIV positive in each year since 1997, broken down by gender. [18340]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information about the number of prisoners with HIV is not collected centrally. The Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) undertook an unlinked, anonymised survey of the prevalence of HIV, hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) among the prisoners in eight prisons in England in 1997–98. Prevalence of HIV was 0.36 per cent.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to review the law prohibiting sexual activity in prisons. [18341]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is no legislation prohibiting sexual activity in prisons.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many mothballed or decommissioned prison places there are within the prison estate, broken down by location; [19051]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of returning mothballed or decommissioned prison places into service; [19057]

(3) if he will take steps to build new prisons. [19053]

Fiona Mactaggart: A number of places at Ranby (46 places), Dartmoor (98 places) and Glen Parva (120 places) have been permanently decommissioned. It is not economic or feasible to bring these places back into use.

Two wings at Long Lartin (152 places) have been taken out of use as they are no longer fit for purpose and a decision to refurbish or replace them is under consideration. The relative cost of each option is still to be determined.

There is a small 12 place mother and baby unit at Askham Grange which is not being currently used as there is no pressure on this facility at present.

The Weare, a 400-place prison ship, was also closed in August 2005, but no decision about its future has yet been taken. There are no plans, at present, to build new prisons.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many new prisons have been built by the Government since 1997. [19317]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have opened nine new prisons since 1997.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mothers have been refused a place in a prison mother and baby unit in each of the last three years. [21784]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information has not been routinely kept for the last three years. However, since April 2005, quarterly figures have been collated.

The first available figures, for the period April to September 2005, show that a total of 15 women were refused a place in a Prison Service mother and baby unit.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison places he has planned for each year up to 2012. [21846]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is a funded building programme to increase operational capacity to 79,100 by June 2006 and 80,400 by 2007. We continue to investigate options for providing further increases in capacity.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisons in England and Wales have been free from illegal drug use in each of the last eight years. [21850]

Fiona Mactaggart: The mandatory drug testing (MDT) programme monitors levels of drug misuse. Prisoners are tested routinely for a panel of seven illegal drugs. No prison, in the past eight years, has been entirely free of illegal drugs.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are being held in each prison in Wales; and what the maximum capacity of each is. [19852]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Details of the population and the useable operational capacity of each prison in Wales (as at 14 October 2005) is set out in the table.

Establishment	*Operational capacity*	*Population*
Cardiff	754	754
Parc	1,036	1,032
Swansea	425	[1]428
Prescoed	170	167
Usk	250	247

[1] The population figure for Swansea includes five prisoners who are authorised to be absent. Authorised absences mean that although prisoners are recorded as part of the establishments population they are either being held in outside facilities for medical treatment or assessment, or have been released on temporary licence for resettlement or compassionate reasons.

Race for Justice Project

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the Race for Justice Project; and if he will make a statement. [21979]

Fiona Mactaggart: An evaluation has been commissioned locally for certain elements of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Race for Justice Project. The findings of this report will be used as a 'lessons learned' for future work and a focus for the next stage of the Race for Justice Project on communityengagement.

The evaluation report is due to be submitted to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Criminal Justice Board in November, along with the two year report of the Project overall. Both will then be published to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Race Group and Office for Criminal Justice Reform Race Unit and will be available upon request.

Reoffending

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prisoners released from HMP Wandsworth have reoffended within two years of release in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* ethnicity and *(c)* faith.[20584]

Fiona Mactaggart: Reconviction rates, which are used as a proxy measure for reoffending, are only available at national level. The most recent data show that 61 per cent. of prisoners released from prison in 2001 were reconvicted of a standard list offence within two years. Information on reconviction by ethnicity and faith is not available at this time.

Further information—including a breakdown of reconviction by sex and age—are published in 'Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2003'. These

publications are available on the Home Office website (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.html) and the House of Commons Library.

Replica Guns

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of firearms seized by police were replica guns which had been converted to be able to fire live ammunition in the last period for which figures are available. [21544]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many random inspection visits were made to each secure training centre in each of the last five years. [16915]

Fiona Mactaggart: Secure Training Centres are inspected by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) (formerly the Social Services Inspectorate)) and Ofsted. The number of random inspections in each of the past five years is set out in the accompanying table. In addition to these, each centre receives a full (3–4 day) annual inspection by CSCI, accompanied by Ofsted.

Random inspections of secure training centres

	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Medway	0	0	1	0	0
Rainsbrook	0	1	0	0	0
Hassockfield	0	1	0	0	0
Oakhill	1	2	Opened August 2004		

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment is made of CCTV footage taken of residents in secure training centres. [16916]

Fiona Mactaggart: CCTV footage is assessed by senior members of the Secure Training Centre operator's staff, to evaluate an event or incident either as it occurs, or following a complaint. Such footage will also be made available to the local child protection team and/or to the police in connection with the investigation of a complaint, and may be used as evidence in criminal proceedings. CCTV footage may also be used by the operator for training purposes.

In addition, the Youth Justice Board's Secure Training Centre Performance Monitor may view video footage to help establish the facts in relation to a complaint, or to a reported incident, in order to decide whether the matter should be referred to the local child protection team, if that has not already been done.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what monitoring of residents by CCTV takes place in secure training centres. [16917]

Fiona Mactaggart: Secure Training Centre operators use CCTV monitoring on site for the purpose of maintaining the security of the premises, preventing crime and assisting with the investigation of crime if a crime is committed. The system is also designed to give confidence to trainees, staff and visitors that they are in a secure environment.

CCTV is used to record activity for security and control purposes—for example in the movement of trainees around the centre—and is monitored from a control room, by trained staff, 24 hours a day.

All individuals entering the centre are made aware, by prominent signs, that they are entering an area where CCTV recording is operating. The cameras do not invade the privacy of trainees inside their bedrooms but do record all movements into and out of each bedroom. All procedures are in line with the Data Protection Act.

There is no legislative requirement for CCTV coverage in Secure Training Centres.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people are in secure training centres, broken down by ethnic origin. [16918]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table gives a breakdown by ethnic origin of the young people placed in secure training centres on 10 October 2005.

Breakdown of secure training centre trainees by ethnic origin as at 10 October 2005

Ethnicity	Hassockfield STC	Medway STC	Oakhill STC	Rainsbrook STC	Grand total
Asian, Bangladeshi	—	—	1	—	1
Asian, Indian	—	—	1	2	3
Asian, Pakistani	—	—	1	—	1
Asian, Other	—	2	—	2	4
Black, African	—	4	1	2	7
Black, Other	—	1	2	1	4
Black, Caribbean	—	7	—	3	10
Mixed, Other	1	1	—	—	2
Mixed, White and Asian	—	—	—	1	1
Mixed, White and Black African	—	1	1	—	2
Mixed, White and Black Caribbean	—	6	6	11	23
Not Available	4	2	1	3	10
Other Ethnic Group	—	2	—	1	3

Breakdown of secure training centre trainees by ethnic origin as at 10 October 2005

Ethnicity	Hassockfield STC	Medway STC	Oakhill STC	Rainsbrook STC	Grand total
White, British	36	44	41	44	165
White, Irish	—	—	—	2	2
White, Other	—	—	2	—	2
Grand total	41	70	57	72	240

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been evaluated on *(a)* inmate and prison staff perceptions of sex offenders and *(b)* the influence of such perceptions on sex offenders' participation in and completion of sex offender treatment programmes. [21726]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service has undertaken research into the reasons why offenders choose not to participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in prison. As part of this work, the perceptions of both staff and prisoners and their influence on participation in the programme were considered. The Prison Service is implementing a strategy to address the issues identified by the research, with the aim of reducing the numbers refusing treatment.

Speeding

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for speeding which have not relied upon speed camera evidence have been brought in each of the last five years. [20939]

Fiona Mactaggart: Available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database are given in the table from 1999–2003 (latest available). 2004 data will be available early in 2006.

Proceedings at magistrates courts for speeding offences[1] not detected by camera, England and Wales, 1999–2003

	Number of offences
1999	131,310
2000	118,497
2001	104,344
2002	90,164
2003	91,285

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic regulation Act 1984 ss. 16, 81, 84, 86, 88 & 89; Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regs. 1973; Parks Regulation (Amendment) Act 1926—byelaws made thereunder.

Note:

Coverage and recording practice affecting the statistics—It is known that for some police force areas, the reporting of court proceedings in particular those relating to summary motoring offences, may be less than complete.

Terrorism

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* arrested and *(b)* detained under the Terrorism Acts, broken down by ethnic origin. [21566]

Hazel Blears: Statistics on the number of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the outcomes of those arrests, are published on the Home Office website on the following link: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/Statistics on the ethnic origin of those arrested, charged or convicted under the Terrorism Act 2000 are not available because this information is not centrally collated.

Under-age Drinking (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sum in fines was imposed for the sale of alcohol to under-18s in Gravesham in 2003. [20082]

Hazel Blears: The sum of fines imposed in 2003 for the sale of alcohol to under-18s in Gravesham was £950. This figure relates to Dartford and Gravesham adult court for the offence; "Selling etc. intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises".

Vandalism

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of vandalism in each local authority in the last period for which figures are available. [20634]

Hazel Blears: Such estimates have not been made for each local authority area.

Victims Code of Practice

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the consultation exercise on the Victims Code of Practice. [19032]

Fiona Mactaggart: The final Code of Practice for Victims of Crime was laid before Parliament on 19 October 2005. A summary of responses to the consultation on the code, which ended on 30 May 2005, was also published on the same day. The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime will come into force in April 2006.

Visas (Poojaris)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to make a decision on the rules on granting visas to poojaris following his Department's consultation on visas for ministers of religion; and if he will make a statement. [23480]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 538W.

Young Offenders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many temporary staff are employed in each young offenders institution. [21791]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the number of casual staff, staff on fixed term contracts and agency staff within each young offender institution is contained in the following table. Figures are provided on a full-time equivalent basis for 30 September 2005.

Young offender institution	Casuals	Fixed-term appointments	Agency staff	Total temporary staff
Aylesbury	4.0	—	—	4.0
Brinsford	11.6	2.7	2.0	16.3
Castington	—	8.0	—	8.0
Deerbolt	5.7	—	1.0	6.7
Feltham	0.6	13.9	—	14.5
Glen Parva	4.3	2.0	6.0	12.3
Hindley	10.5	—	—	10.5
Lancaster Farms	1.6	1.0	4.0	6.6
Northallerton	6.0	—	—	6.0
Portland	4.0	11.4	—	15.4
Reading	5.4	0.8	—	6.2
Rochester	3.0	1.0	1.0	5.0
Stoke Heath	5.0	11.5	—	16.5
Swinfen Hall	19.0	24.1	—	43.1
Thorn Cross	9.0	1.0	—	10.0
Total	89.8	77.3	14.0	181.1

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of days of staff sickness absense was in each young offenders institution in 2004–05. [21792]

Fiona Mactaggart: The first table shows the average number of working days, lost due to staff sickness in all young offender institutions in 2004–05.

The second table shows the average number of working days lost due to staff sickness in all public sector Prison Service juvenile establishments in 2004–05. Information on the privately operated juvenile prison Ashfield young offender institution, is not available, as this is commercial in confidence.

Table 1: Average number of working days lost per staff member per year in young offender institutions in 2004–05

Establishment Name	Number
Aylesbury	13.1
Brinsford	11.3
Castington	12.7
Deerbolt	13.5
Feltham	13.7
Glen Parva	9.7
Hindley	21.8
Lancaster Farms	14.7
Northallerton	18.4
Portland	16.6
Reading	13.1
Rochester	14.1
Stoke Heath	15.9
Swinfen Hall	9.3
Thorn Cross	16.7

Table 2: Average number of working days lost per staff member per year in all public sector Prison Service juvenile establishments in 2004–05.

Establishment Name	Number
Huntercombe	14.5
Warren Hill	10.9
Werrington	14.4
Wetherby	13.8

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug addicted young offenders from Easington constituency have been sentenced in each of the last three years. [20348]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Court Proceedings Database that is used for Home Office sentencing statistics does not include information on whether an offender is addicted to drugs at the time of sentence.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what flexibility local magistrates have in deciding whether to publish the names of youths *(a)* with antisocial behaviour orders and *(b)* convicted of other offences. [20934]

Hazel Blears: Under the Children and Young Person's Act 1933, section 49, automatic reporting restrictions apply in all youth courts. It has been an established principle in British law since 1933 that juvenile defendants should not have their identity made public in criminal cases unless the court feels that the public interest requires it. The courts do not routinely grant such applications and each case is considered on its own merits.

There are no automatic reporting restrictions on antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) as they are civil orders. However, courts do have the power to impose reporting restrictions in ASBO cases and where they are imposed, they must be adhered to.

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and until recently young people who breached their ASBOs were protected by the automatic reporting restrictions of the youth court. However, provisions in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 removed these automatic restrictions which means ASBO breaches by young people can now be reported. Reporting restrictions have only been lifted on cases of Breach of ASBOs in the youth court, they remain in place for other youth court matters.

Zimbabwean Farmers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Zimbabwean farmers have been granted asylum in the UK since 2001. [22964]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Information on the occupation of asylum seekers is not routinely collected as part of the processing of asylum applications and is not centrally collated.

Information on initial decisions and appeal outcomes is published quarterly and annually. The next publication covering the third quarter of 2005 will be available on 22 November 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

HEALTH

"Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" Consultation

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget is for the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise; and how much has been spent on it to date. [18819]

Mr. Byrne: The estimated central cost of the nationally organised elements of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation, excluding Department of Health staff costs, is £1,245,000. Funding it comes from the Department's running costs budget. Under resource accounting, £975,000 has been spent, or assigned for expenditure.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who will be formally consulted as part of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise. [18822]

Mr. Byrne: The "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation is designed to consult the public on what they want from community health and social care services. Alongside this public consultation, a wide range of health and social care stakeholders and staff are being consulted.

Acute Hospitals (Bed Utilisation)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average percentage level of bed utilisation in acute hospitals was in each year since 2000. [20504]

Mr. Byrne: Beds data are available at trust level. The table shows the average occupancy rate at acute trusts from 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Average occupancy rate, acute trusts, England, 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Average occupancy rate (percentage)
2000–01	83.4
2001–02	84.3
2002–03	85.0
2003–04	85.4
2004–05	84.4

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Allergies

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist consultants in allergies there were in the NHS in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [19759]

Mr. Byrne: The number of medical consultants within the allergy specialities since 1997 is shown in the table.

England

	Allergy	*Immunology (with allergy)*	*Immunology*	*Headcount Total*
1997	—	22	41	63
1998	—	20	41	61
1999	—	22	39	61
2000	6	—	49	55
2001	8	—	49	57
2002	17	—	63	80
2003	20	—	63	83
2004	26	—	67	93

Bed Closures

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what effects she estimates planned community hospital and bed closures will have on NHS expenditure in the financial year *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [17704]

Mr. Byrne: Making decisions on local healthcare provision is a matter for primary care trusts and strategic health authorities (SHAs) in consultation with the local population. Therefore, the Department is not in a position to estimate what effects local decisions on any changes in service will have on overall national health service expenditure. It remains the responsibility of SHAs to deliver overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance.

Budget Deficits (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the reasons for *(a)* the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust's, *(b)* the Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare Trust's and *(c)* Oxford Radcliffe NHS Trust's budget deficit for 2005–06. [20399]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities to deliver financial balance for their local health communities. This includes working with organisations in deficit to ascertain the reasons for the deficit, and to manage the position locally in relation to the recovery of deficits. Any recovery plans developed by organisations must address the issue of making good the deficits in future years.

The Oxfordshire national health service bodies work in partnership with the Thames Valley strategic health authority, which has the expertise on how best to manage funds within the health economy.

Cataract Operations

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations have been performed by the independent sector on behalf of the NHS in each year since 1997; how many of these operations in each of these years have required the

national health service to provide a follow-up service to patients with needs relating directly to their operation; and what the mean cost has been to the NHS of each such follow-up procedure each year. [17556]

Mr. Byrne: As part of the centrally procured independent sector treatment centre (ISTC) programme, Netcare has delivered over 18,000 ophthalmology procedures since February 2004. The Department does not collect figures on the cost of follow up treatment that may take place in the national health service, but all independent sector providers, working under the ISTC programme, have agreed local level service agreements to ensure suitable follow-up care arrangements for patients.

Children's Diet

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated for educating and advising parents on the benefits of a healthy diet for their children in 2005–06. [21035]

Caroline Flint: A total budget of £2 million has been allocated for the 5 A DAY programme for 2005–06, which includes promotion and education of the 5 A DAY message to parents and other population groups on the benefits of a healthy diet for their children. Also, as part of phase one of healthy start in Devon and Cornwall, approximately £50,000 has been allocated towards producing materials for beneficiaries that contain information and guidance on nutrition and healthy eating for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. Another £500,000 has been allocated in 2005–06 for the obesity social marketing campaign promised in the White Paper "Choosing health". The campaign will take an early focus on children under 11 and their influences, primarily parents/carers.

There is an allocation of £200 million over the next three years for the improvement of school food, which could be used to educate pupils and parents in healthier eating at school. In addition, the School Food Trust is currently being set up with a budget of £15 million to support schools in making the transformation to healthy meals, giving independent support and advice to schools and parents.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is also a major source of information on food and nutrition. Although the FSA has not specifically allocated any resource to advise parents in this manner, their eatwell website (available at www.eatwell.gov.uk), together with life stage healthy eating leaflets and media features, continues to be an important tool that the Government use to provide parents with practical healthy eating advice for children and young people.

Clinical Negligence Payments

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what clinical negligence payments have been made by hospital trusts in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* London since 1997. [21066]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Clinical negligence payments made by hospital trusts in Essex and London since April 2002 are shown in the table. Information on payments made before April 2002 is not held centrally.

Clinical negligence payments made by hospital trusts in Essex and London, 2002–05

	Total (£)	
Payment year	*Essex*	*London*
2002–03	6,424,844	50,650,510
2003–04	6,343,622	69,814,682
2004–05	12,168,631	82,870,020

Consultant Referrals

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting times for consultant referrals were for each year since 2000. [18550]

Mr. Byrne: The median time waited for a first out-patient appointment with a consultant for each year since 2000 is shown in the table.

Average waiting times for consultant referrals: 1999–2000 to 2004–05

Financial year[1]	*Out-patient median time waited in weeks (commissioner based)*
1999–2000	7.73
2000–01	7.46
2001–02	7.63
2002–03	7.40
2003–04	7.10
2004–05	7.00

[1] Fourth quarter data.

Correspondence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many letters to her Department from hon. Members in session *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 remain unanswered, broken down by those which are (i) one month old, (ii) two months old, (iii) three months old, (iv) four months old and (v) over six months old. [13864]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has answered all letters from hon. and right hon. Members received before 18 May 2005.

As at 18 July, the Department had a total of 868 letters from hon. and right hon. Members to be answered. Of these:

846 (97.4 percent.) were received in that month (19 June to 18 July inclusive), and so were up to one month old;

21 (2.5 percent.) were received in the previous month (19 May to 18 June inclusive), and so were up to two months old;

One (0.1 percent.) was received on 18 May and so was over two months old.

The Department currently answers over 97 percent., of all letters from hon. and right hon. Members within 20 working days.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of departments in replying to Members/peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, column, 137–40ws.

Defect and Failure Reporting System

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2663W, on the Defect and Failure

Reporting System, what the main categories of defects were; and how many defects there were in each of the previous years for which figures are available. [18891]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Defect and Failure Reporting System: 1997–2004

Defect and failure categories	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*	*2001*	*2000*	*1999*	*1998*	*1997*	*1996*	*1995*
Ambulances and similar vehicles, tugs, etc.	1	0	0	0	1	3	5	2	5	4
Buildings, building components and lifts	7	6	3	0	0	6	9	6	14	4
Catering	5	3	5	0	3	3	20	21	29	17
Communications equipment	0	6	2	0	3	2	2	3	3	8
Engineering plant and services										
Boilers	0	1	3	0	4	3	4	3	4	8
Electrical installations	12	7	7	3	8	11	18	25	22	25
Generators	0	0	2	0	4	3	1	0	3	0
Heating	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	0	1	0
Other fixed plant	1	6	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0
Ventilating	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	3	2	6
Water and drainage	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	2
Fire protection installations and equipment	4	2	1	1	1	2	3	5	3	7
Fixed luminaires, including operating and examination lamps	1	2	6	0	2	6	15	5	11	10
Incinerators and other clinical waste treatment equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Installation aspects of fume cupboards and micro biological safety cabinets	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laundries	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	2
Lightning protection and electrostatic discharges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	6
Maintenance and cleaning	2	3	0	0	1	2	2	2	10	11
Miscellaneous	14	14	26	2	20	19	21	23	21	14
Permanently installed sterilizers, bedpan washers and disposal units	2	2	7	1	5	5	11	13	21	19
Piped medical gas and vacuum installations, VIE's and anaesthetic gas scavenging systems	7	8	9	5	10	10	31	8	10	6
Workshops	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total for year	58	67	76	12	67	81	146	125	167	144

Defect and failure categories	*1994*	*1993*	*1992*	*1991*	*1990*	*1989*	*1988*	*1987*	*1986*	*1985*
Ambulances and similar vehicles, tugs, etc.	7	13	4	1	1	4	4	2	2	2
Buildings, building components and lifts	0	3	1	2	8	7	7	4	5	7
Catering	22	15	15	30	28	33	19	15	12	17
Communications equipment	4	0	3	2	10	5	6	2	3	3
Engineering plant and services										
Boilers	6	13	8	26	6	13	10	4	6	6
Electrical installations	16	5	18	12	13	14	11	16	23	20
Generators	4	1	2	5	7	7	2	5	9	8
Heating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other fixed plant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ventilating	2	1	3	3	2	1	0	2	2	2
Water and drainage	2	0	2	4	0	4	4	0	1	0
Fire protection installations and equipment	1	8	12	12	6	5	2	6	8	8
Fixed luminaires, including operating and examination lamps	7	16	16	13	11	7	18	9	15	10
Incinerators and other clinical waste treatment equipment	3	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	1	2
Installation aspects of fume cupboards and micro biological safety cabinets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laundries	6	2	7	12	2	8	3	7	4	8
Lightning protection and electrostatic discharges	2	3	14	5	6	21	9	6	5	4
Maintenance and cleaning	10	16	19	26	15	10	7	7	5	5
Miscellaneous	13	18	23	9	12	12	12	7	2	10
Permanently installed sterilizers, bedpan washers and disposal units	20	16	23	37	34	23	35	6	17	25
Piped medical gas and vacuum installations, VIE's and anaesthetic gas scavenging systems	8	7	7	13	15	6	13	10	10	17
Workshops	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for year	133	137	177	214	177	182	164	108	130	154

Departmental Records

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what statistics her Department records relating to applications for vacancies for *(a)* junior doctor, *(b)* pre-registration house officer and *(c)* senior house officer posts; and what recent assessment she has made of the competition for jobs at each level. [19670]

Mr. Byrne: Information on applications for vacancies in respect of junior doctors, pre-registration house officer (PRHO) and senior house officer (SHO) posts is not collected centrally.

Entry into the training grades is competitive and there has always been healthy competition for posts.

The number of specialist registrar (SpR) posts available is based on the future demand for trained specialists in each specialty determined by service demand and the impact of key government objectives.

We are aware that the number of applicants for most SHO posts has risen this year and it is likely that this is especially so for SHO posts in popular areas such as

London and in popular specialties such as surgery. However, some of the reports of the difficulty in obtaining SHO posts have been exaggerated.

We value highly those doctors in whose education and training we have invested heavily, and recognise that they have made a substantial commitment to the medical profession and a future career in the national health service. We want these doctors to progress and develop their careers in the NHS where we see them as the doctors of the future, delivering modernised patient centred services.

Design Pilot Projects

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department is paying for each Inquiry by design pilot project undertaken by The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment. [19975]

Jane Kennedy: The Department commissioned The Prince's Foundation to undertake three pilot inquiry by designs for the national health service. The Department has provided the following funding for the pilots:

	£
Cherry Knowle Hospital	70,000
Liverpool Children's Hospital	65,000
Sutton Health Campus (critical care centre)	60,000

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment was commissioned to undertake an inquiry by design pilot for the NHS. [19977]

Jane Kennedy: NHS Estates, an Executive agency of the Department, first commissioned The Prince's Foundation to undertake an enquiry by design (EbD) in 2003. Following the success of the first pilot EbD, the Department commissioned a further two pilot EbD's in 2004.

Drugs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS has spent on drugs in each of the last eight years; and how many prescriptions were made. [18829]

Jane Kennedy: The national health service drugs spend for England from 1996–97 to 2003–04 is shown in table 2.

The number of prescription items dispensed in the community, rounded to the nearest million, is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Prescription items dispensed in the community: 1997–2004

	Number (million)
1997	500
1998	513
1999	530
2000	552
2001	587
2002	617
2003	650
2004	686

Notes:
Prescription information is taken from the PCA system, supplied by the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA), and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community i.e. by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data does not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.
Source:
Prescription cost analysis (PCA) data.

Table 2: NHS drug spend for England: 1996–97 to 2003–04

	Primary care				Hospital and community health services	
	Gross		Net			
	Outturn (£ million)	Growth (percentage)	Outturn (£ million)	Growth (percentage)	Outturn (£ million)	Growth (percentage)
1996–97	3,808	8.6	3,774	7.9	961	10.0
1997–98	4,107	7.8	4,085	8.2	1,088	13.2
1998–99	4,356	6.1	4,339	6.2	1,211	11.3
1999–2000	4,851	11.4	4,833	11.4	1,369	13.0
2000–01	5,160	—	5,158	—	1,530	11.8
2001–02	5,714	10.8	5,707	10.6	1,740	13.7
2002–03	6,345	11.0	6,342	11.1	2,013	15.7
2003–04	6,963	9.7	6,961	9.8	2,311	14.8

	Total drug spend			
	Gross		Net	
	Outturn (£ million)	Growth (percentage)	Outturn (£ million)	Growth (percentage)
1996–97	4,769	8.9	4,735	8.3
1997–98	5,195	8.9	5,173	9.3
1998–99	5,567	7.2	5,550	7.3
1999–2000	6,220	11.7	6,202	11.7
2000–01	6,690	7.5	6,688	—
2001–02	7,454	11.4	7,447	11.3
2002–03	8,358	12.1	8,355	12.2
2003–04	9,274	11.0	9,272	11.0

Notes:
1. The total actual cost of drugs and appliances prescribed by general practitioners/nurses within England plus any central budget expenditure or locally authorised payments. NB. Primary care actual drug cost = Net ingredient cost + VAT + container costs—discount allowance.
2. Primary care NET figures include pharmaceutical price regulation scheme (PPRS) receipt savings.
3. Hospital and community health services expenditure on drugs includes medical gases.
4. From 2000–01, figures are in resource terms, prior to this figures are in cash terms. Cash figures relate to February to January prescribing due to delay in prescription processing and payment calculations. Resource figures represent the actual cost between April to March.

Source:
PPA, England.

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used in deciding on the referral of a new, licensed drug to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; and if she will make a statement. [20358]

Jane Kennedy: Information about the criteria used in deciding on the referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence of a new, licensed drug is available on the Department's website at:
www.dh.gov.uk/nice/consultation2002.

GP Practices

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many GP practices have started to use the "Choose and Book" system since its inception, broken down by *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* primary care trust. [19506]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested, as in late October, has been placed in the Library, but this information changes daily as more and more general practitioner practices 'go live' with "Choose and Book".

Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings she has had to review the operation of section 27 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. [20738]

Mr. Byrne: Ministers have had no meetings to review the operation of section 27 of the Health and Social Care Act 2003. Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts, is currently consulting on how it carries out its responsibilities under section 27 of the Act.

Health Services (Rural Areas)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation on the costs incurred in delivering health services to sparsely populated rural areas, with particular reference to *(a)* the Morecambe Bay NHS hospitals trust and *(b)* the Morecambe Bay primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [20485]

Mr. Byrne: The Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA) makes recommendations to Ministers in advance of every round of revenue allocations to primary care trusts. ACRA is an independent body, made up of national health service managers, academics and general practitioners. ACRA does not advise on the effects of the weighted capitation formula for individual NHS organisations.

The role of ACRA is to oversee the development of the weighted capitation formula to ensure equity in the allocation of resources to the NHS. Rurality has been looked at by ACRA on a number of occasions. As a result of work commissioned by ACRA to look at the effect of rurality on the cost of providing certain services, an adjustment was made to the weighted capitation formula in respect of the unavoidable geographical cost differences in the provision of emergency ambulance services. The emergency ambulance cost adjustment was introduced from the 1998–99 health authority allocations.

HIV Tests

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many HIV tests in each genito-urinary medicine clinic in each London strategic health authority were *(a)* offered and *(b)* taken in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [18654]

Jane Kennedy: The numbers of HIV tests offered and taken in the genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics within the London strategic health authorities (SHAs) are shown in the table. The dataset used to compile this data was taken from the KC60 return, which is made by all GUM clinics to the health protection agency. Only those tests offered and taken in GUM clinics are recorded in the KC60 return, testing undertaken in other clinical settings, such as general practice, are not recorded in the dataset. Data was only shown for 2003 and 2004, as the KC60 code that records sexual health screen with a HIV test (S2) was only introduced in 2003.

The data do not represent the number of HIV tests offered and taken up by the population resident within each SHA, as many patients cross health boundaries to access GUM clinics. In addition, the gender and sexual orientation mix varies between clinics. Some clinics are attended by a high number of men who have sex with men and consequently this influences the number of HIV tests offered and taken.

Numbers of HIV testsoffered[1] and taken[2] in GUM clinics bySHA. London: 2003and 2004

SHA/Clinic name	*Offered/Tested*	*2003*	*2004*
North Central London			
Archway Sexual Health Clinic	Offered	5,597	6,676
	Tested	4,323	4,991
Clare Simpson House	Offered	1,526	3,052
	Tested	1,262	2,313
Moorfields Eye Hospital	Offered	109	117
	Tested	86	90
Mortimer Market Centre	Offered	14,432	16,635
	Tested	13,136	14,895
St Ann's Hospital	Offered	4,392	6,489
	Tested	2,495	3,454
The Royal Free Hospital	Offered	3,950	3,420
	Tested	2,933	2,672

Numbers of HIV testsoffered[1] and taken[2] in GUM clinics bySHA, London: 2003and 2004

SHA/Clinic name	Offered/Tested	2003	2004
Town Clinic	Offered	2,210	2,716
	Tested	1,410	1,668
North East London			
Forest Healthcare	Offered	1,762	1,426
	Tested	1,660	1,094
Homerton Hospital	Offered	11,888	10,141
	Tested	8,157	7,011
John Scott Health Centre, Choices N4	Offered	17	90
	Tested	17	84
Newham General Hospital	Offered	3,429	5,783
	Tested	2,492	3,251
Oldchurch Hospital	Offered	881	601
	Tested	627	566
St Bartholomew's Hospital	Offered	4,347	5,419
	Tested	1,141	2,987
Sydenham Centre	Offered	722	750
	Tested	657	717
The Royal London Hospital	Offered	8,947	8,362
	Tested	2,412	563
North West London			
Central Middlesex Hospital, Patrick Clements Clinic	Offered	6,366	6,829
	Tested	4,269	4,690
Charing Cross Hospital	Offered	5,720	8,490
	Tested	4,278	5,151
Ealing Hospital, Pasteur Suite	Offered	1,941	4,184
	Tested	1,439	3,273
Jefferiss Wing	Offered	17,244	20,411
	Tested	12,663	14,783
John Hunter Clinic, 4th floor	Offered	9,051	9,750
	Tested	6,425	7,548
Northwick Park Hospital	Offered	3,806	3,506
	Tested	2,664	2,777
South Westminster Centre	Offered	6,566	8,705
	Tested	5,285	7,020
Tudor Wing, Hillingdon Hospital	Offered	2,091	1,940
	Tested	1,696	1,609
West Middlesex University Hospital	Offered	3,198	6,260
	Tested	2,999	3,984
South East London			
Beckenham Hospital	Offered	2,708	3,268
	Tested	1,551	1,915
King's College Hospital[3]	Offered	12,982	17,474
	Tested	6,453	8,032
Lloyd Clinic, Second Floor	Offered	5,866	4,910
	Tested	4,175	3,594
St. Thomas's Hospital	Offered	16,798	15,652
	Tested	9,672	9,779
Trafalgar Clinic	Offered	5,341	5,832
	Tested	3,816	4,266
South West London			
Kingston Hospital	Offered	4,034	5,663
	Tested	3,463	4,589
Mayday University Hospital	Offered	4,063	9,628
	Tested	2,136	3,187
Queen Mary's University Hospital	Offered	4,913	4,954
	Tested	2,553	2,585
St. Helier Hospital	Offered	4,019	4,511
	Tested	1,694	2,069
The Courtyard Clinic	Offered	15,874	16,265
	Tested	10,882	8,984

[1] Offered defined as KC60 codes S2 (HIV antibody test and sexual health screen) plus P1A (HIV antibody test no sexual health screen) plus P1B (HIV antibody test offered and refused).

[2] Test taken defined as S2 + P1A.

[3] King's College Hospital does not collect information for code S2.

Hospital Admissions (Tariffs)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that the structure of tariffs does not provide an incentive to NHS trusts to structure a patient's course of treatment to involve multiple admissions to hospital, except where this is clinically appropriate; and if she will make a statement. [19705]

Mr. Byrne: Under payment by results (PbR), providers of national health service services will be paid at the appropriate national tariff rate for each spell. A spell is the care provided by a single trust between the admission and discharge, or death, of a patient.

The Department is currently consulting on a code of conduct for all organisations involved with PbR which makes clear that the interests of patients are paramount. The code will be supported by the introduction of an assurance regime, currently being developed with the Audit Commission, which will enable commissioners of treatment to monitor, among other things, the appropriateness of admissions.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deliveries of Tamiflu she expects to receive in each month until the planned number of courses have been stockpiled. [20877]

Caroline Flint: The delivery schedule indicates that we will receive 800,000 adult treatment courses per month. We are due to have an additional 900,000 courses (1,700,000 in total) delivered in March 2006, an additional 800,000 courses (1,600,000 in total) in July and August 2006, and an additional 462,000 (1,262,000 in total) in September to complete the order. The difference between 14,162,000 and the 14.6 million courses quoted is represented by powder to make up suspension for children.

Information Standards Board (Data)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her Answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2757W, on data, when the first data collection will commence for each of the datasets approved by the Information Standards Board to date. [20654]

Mr. Byrne: Data collection has already commenced for elements of all datasets that have been approved by the NHS Information Standards Board.

Lichfield Hospital

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what *(a)* medical departments and services and *(b)* number of in-patient beds will be provided at the new hospital under construction in Lichfield; [20882]

(2) what plans there are for the provision of a minor injuries unit at the new hospital under construction in Lichfield; and if she will make a statement; [20893]

(3) if she will list *(a)* the medical services and in-patient beds provided by the Lichfield Victoria and Lichfield St Michael's and Hammerwich hospitals and *(b)* medical services and in-patient beds which will be provided by the new hospital under construction in Lichfield. [20895]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The services currently available at the Hammerwich, Victoria and St Michael's hospitals will be reprovided at the new hospital which is currently

under construction. This development will have 52 beds as well as a minor injuries unit and a renal dialysis unit. The capital cost for this project is £17 million and is being provided centrally. It is expected to be completed by late 2006 and to start receiving patients from early 2007.

Lung Cancer

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding she has made available for research into lung cancer in each year since 1997; and what percentage of the overall cancer research budget this represented in each case. [18338]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

MRC spend figures for research on lung cancer are shown in the table.

	Amount (£ million)
1997–98	0.093
1998–99	0.268
1999–2000	0.184
2000–01	0.581
2001–02	1.6
2002–03	1.8
2003–04	2.1

Note:
Scientific definitions have evolved over time and the MRC has improved methods of capturing data and identifying spend. For these reasons spend figures from one year to the next are not always comparable, for example, spend on fellowships was not included before 2000–01.

It is often the case that research classified as being undertaken in one cancer site will have implications in another. In addition, the MRC funds a considerable amount of basic underpinning research that is excluded from site-specific figures.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to and managed by national health service organisations. These organisations account for their use of the allocations they receive from the Department in an annual research and development report. The reports identify total, aggregated expenditure on national priority areas, including cancer. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including those concerned with site-specific cancers, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Lymphoedema

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with lymphoedema in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* England in each year since 1997. [21052]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the incidence of lymphoedema are not available.

Mental Health Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialists in cognitive behavioural therapy are employed for the treatment of mental illness in the NHS expressed as *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalents. [19014]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Myasthenia Gravis

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding her Department has allocated to the research of myasthenia gravis. [20060]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The MRC is currently funding a five-year senior non-clinical fellowship at a total cost of £913,000 specifically to research disease mechanisms and ribonucleic acid-based therapies for pathogenic mutations at the neuromuscular synapse. This basic study aims to understand the underlying mechanisms behind myasthenia gravis and other similar conditions.

The MRC has also recently awarded a £205,000 research grant to support a study that aims to investigate a novel therapeutic approach for the silencing of genes causing neuromuscular disease. It is hoped that this research will have widespread application where nucleic acids are contemplated as potential therapeutic agents for muscle or neuromuscular junction disease.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of individual projects, including some concerned with myasthenia gravis, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Neurologists

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many neurologists were practising in the NHS in each of the last four years. [19560]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of neurologists practising in the national health service in the United Kingdom is not collected centrally.

However information on the number of medical staff within the neurology specialty practising in the NHS in England is shown in the table.

Headcount

	All staff	*Of which: consultants*
2001	751	359
2002	770	366
2003	841	410
2004	902	449

NHS Productivity

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures her Department uses to measure productivity in the NHS. [19847]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* The Department is currently working with the University of York and the National Institute for Economic and Social Research to develop an improved quality adjusted measure of national health service productivity. Until this work is complete, we are measuring NHS value for money using our interim cost efficiency which compares changes in output with changes in input adjusted for quality expenditure. In 2003–04, this measure suggested that value for money improved by 2.1 per cent.

NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received regarding possible anti-competitive practices by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency; from whom she has received such representations; and what assessment she has made of NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency compliance with European Union public procurement directives, with particular reference to its National Framework Agreement for the supply of medical locums. [19203]

Jane Kennedy: I am aware that the Recruitment and Employment Confederation expressed concerns last year regarding the use of national framework agreements and its possible impact on small and medium enterprises. There has been regular communication between the confederation and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) to alleviate these concerns.

In relation to the medical locum framework tendered this year, I understand that there has only been one company who has specifically accused NHS PASA of anti-competitive practices and that this case is still being investigated as part of the internal complaints procedure.

NHS PASA's role is to provide a centre of excellence of purchasing and supply within the NHS. It fully recognises the pre-eminence of the European Union procurement directives and staff operate in accordance with the agencies operational purchasing procedures which are in line with the directives.

As part of the NHS PASA's governance arrangements there is an internal audit service provided by Bentley Jennison operating in accordance with Government internal Audit Standards, these audits cover the NHS PASA's adherence to European Union public procurement practices. This program of audits is agreed with the advice of the agency's audit committee who will consider the results of these audits and provide any advice to the chief executive that is felt to be appropriate.

NHS PASA is also externally audited by BSI Management Systems in order to ensure they are meeting the procurement practices.

NHS Redress Systems

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to reform the NHS systems of redress for individuals who are dissatisfied with the care they have received from the NHS. [20072]

Jane Kennedy: The NHS Redress Bill, which contains provisions for establishing an NHS Redress Scheme, was introduced in the House of Lords on 12 October 2005.

The NHS Redress Scheme is a completely new approach to the handling of clinical negligence cases. Its aims are three-fold:

to provide a real alternative to litigation for the cases that fall within the scheme, including addressing the delays and legal costs that are part and parcel of the current system,

placing the emphasis on putting things right for patients as a matter of course and providing the explanation, apologies and reassurance that patients tell us they want,

contributing to a culture of learning in the national health service, providing impetus for wider service improvement.

For the first time, the patient is at the heart of the process of responding when things go wrong. An NHS Redress Scheme will ensure a simpler and more effective approach to making things right for patients and ensuring that where there has been clinical negligence, the approach supports proper resolution. To be eligible under the scheme, the incident must arise out of a negligent clinical act or omission in connection with the diagnosis of illness, the care or the treatment of a patient, by a healthcare professional. The liability must arise out of hospital services provided as part of the NHS in England or Wales.

However, we expect all NHS patients to benefit from the more open, transparent approach when things go wrong and the proactive response to learning from mistakes.

The detail of how the scheme will work in practice, including the financial limits, time scales, etc, will be included in secondary legislation, which will be published in draft form for consultation following Royal Assent of the NHS Redress Bill.

NHS Trusts

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take with regards to the NHS trusts which are in deficit and which have not come forward with proposals to eliminate such deficits before the end of the financial year. [20395]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver overall financial balance for their local health communities, and to ensure that each and every body achieves financial balance.

SHAs can agree a recovery plan, which phases the recovery of deficits over a number of years. This would require other national health service organisations, within the health economy, to underspend over the same

period. Any such arrangements would have to be subject to the agreement of local providers, commissioners and the managing SHA.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to the Answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2735W, on NHS trusts (final accounts), when the figures for 2004–05 will be published; [19685]

(2) pursuant to her Answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2735W, on final accounts, what the equivalent figures are for 2004–05. [20655]

Jane Kennedy: The financial position for all national health service organisations, based on the 2004–05 audited accounts information, was made available on the Department's website on 19 September 2005.

The cumulative breakeven position for NHS trusts in London for 2004–05 is shown in the table.

NHS trusts (England), by strategic health authority (SHA) in London	*£ thousand* *Break-even cumulative position 2004–05*
Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospital NHS Trust	20
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	(19,564)
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	(757)
Barts and The London NHS Trust	(1,054)
Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust	28,754
Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust	2,447
Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust	5,392
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare Trust	(164)
Ealing Hospital NHS Trust	(375)
East London and The City Mental Health NHS Trust	235
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	(1,736)
Great Ormond St. Hospital for Children NHS Trust	1,771
Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	7,577
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	(18,384)
King's College Hospital NHS Trust	(3,766)
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	481
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	75
Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust	(65)
Newham University Hospital NHS Trust	282
North East London Mental Health NHS Trust	333
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	(5,360)
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	(13,546)
Oxleas NHS Trust	1,243
Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	(8,942)
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust	(6,512)
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	(3,165)
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	(13,148)
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	(3,769)
South London and Maudsley NHS Trust	(339)
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	(23,596)
St. Mary's NHS Trust	(4,570)
South West London and St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust	401
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust	54
The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust	(1,295)
The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	(6,646)
The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust	(1,500)
West London Mental Health NHS Trust	(1,353)
West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	(4,943)
Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust	63

Notes:

1. These figures have been taken from the 2004–05 summarisation schedules. They should be treated as provisional until they are signed off by the National Audit Office/Chief Executive.

2. In relation to some NHS organisations, the figures for 2003–04 have been restated for prior year adjustments. The organisations affected are:

Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust (previously showing £4.2 million surplus, now restated to £18 million surplus).

Ealing Hospital NHS Trust (previously showing £559,000 deficit, now restated to £376,000 deficit).

3. The following organisations achieved foundation trust status and as a result are not included on the 2004–05 table. NHS foundation trusts do not report their financial position directly to the Department. Monitor has been given responsibility for the regulation of NHS foundation trusts:

Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

University College London Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

NHS Walk-in Centres

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to commission further research on the cost effectiveness of NHS walk-in-centres. [20846]

Mr. Byrne: Following the independent evaluation of the initial national health service walk-in centres, which was published in 2002, a further independent evaluation of more recent NHS walk-in centre models is now under way by Sheffield and Bristol universities and is expected to be published in 2006.

NICE

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the cost of running the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has been in each of the last five years; [19898]

(2) how many people have been employed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in each of the last five years. [19901]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham (Mr. Hands) on 27 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1374W, and on 29 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1690W. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent body. Figures on the numbers of staff employed by NICE and its accounts can be found in their annual reports on its website at: www.nice.org.uk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence regarding the prescription of Herceptin for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. [19913]

Jane Kennedy: Herceptin for early stage breast cancer was referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on 21 July 2005. I have received proposals from NICE for a new more rapid assessment process for single drugs and health technologies. I most recently discussed this issue briefly with the chairman and chief executive of NICE at the Institute's annual accountability review on 13 October.

Non-emergency Operations

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* Redbridge, *(b)* Waltham Forest and *(c)* England received (i) laser eye surgery, (ii) cataract removal, (iii) bladder keyhole surgery, (iv) coronary artery bypass graft, (v) knee replacement, (vi) hip replacement, (vii) ingrown toenail operations and (viii) varicose vein treatment in the last year for which figures are available; and what the average cost was of each operation to the NHS. [18957]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the costs of national health service hospital services are gathered at healthcare resource group (HRG) level, not at the level of individual procedures. These data are collected as part of the annual reference cost collection.

The table shows the relevant HRG category aligned with the information requested for the following procedures:

cataract removal
bladder keyhole surgery
coronary artery bypass graft
knee replacement
hip replacement
varicose vein treatment

All data comes from the 2003–04 reference cost collection.

Information on "laser eye surgery" and "ingrown toenail operations" is not shown as these costs are not separately identified within the reference cost collection.

			Redbridge1	*Waltham Forest2*	*England*	
HRG	*HRG Description*	*Description*	*FCEs3*	*FCEs3*	*FCEs3*	*National Average (£)*
B13	Phakoemulsification Cataract Extraction and Insertion of Lens	cataract removal	1,530	2,491	276,004	717
B14	Non Phakoemulsification Cataract Surgery	cataract removal	2	151	5,567	793
E04	Coronary Bypass	coronary artery bypass graft	2	—	19,215	7,131
G13	Cholecystectomy >69 or with complications or comorbidities	bladder keyhole surgery	103	31	11,109	2,449
G14	Cholecystectomy <70 without complications or comorbidities	bladder keyhole surgery	279	119	36,442	1,723
H04	Primary Knee Replacement	knee replacement	386	178	46,585	5,306
H80	Primary Hip Replacement Cemented	hip replacement	222	90	36,467	4,750
H81	Primary Hip Replacement Uncemented	hip replacement	77	36	6,852	4,603
Q11	Varicose Vein Procedures	varicose vein treatment	564	161	43,386	967

[1] Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust.
[2] Whipps Cross University Hospitals NHS Trust.
[3] Finished consultant episodes (FCEs) as reported in 2003–04 reference cost collection.

Nurses/Doctors

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from *(a)* NHS bodies and *(b)* other interested parties regarding the system of making funding available for the provision of return to practice courses; which bodies and parties made such representations; and what the content was of those representations. [18375]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has received a number of representations following the decision to devolve funding.

From 1 April 2004, responsibility for funding the bursaries for nurses returning to work in the national health service was devolved to primary care trusts (PCTs). This gives PCTs the flexibility to determine the appropriate investment for return to practice, working

in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders. This change coincides with our allocating historic levels of funding to PCTs to ensure the NHS secures the work force necessary to deliver improved services.

For the three-year revenue allocations to cover 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06, PCTs received an average cash increase of 9.22 per cent., 9.55 per cent. and 9.32 per cent. This is an average over the three years of 30.83 per cent. For the recent round of allocations to cover 2006–07 and 2007–08, PCTs received average cash increases of 9.2 per cent. and 9.4 per cent. This is an average over the two years of 19.5 per cent.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors from overseas are working in England following recruitment drives by the Government in their countries, broken down by country. [19561]

Mr. Byrne: We have bilateral agreements or memoranda of understanding with India, Indonesia, Philippines and Spain. We have also recruited doctors from Austria, Germany and Italy.

The number of doctors and nurses registering with the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council respectively since 2001 are shown in the tables.

Number of doctors recruited—including specialist registrars, general practitioners and junior doctors

	Year of registration			
Country	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Austria	44	77	60	83
Germany	303	353	383	771
India	1,326	1,892	2,985	3,643
Italy	212	225	281	176
Indonesia	1	0	0	1
Spain	88	115	121	107

Number of nurses recruited

	Year of registration			
Country	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
India	218	1,352	2,653	3,709
Indonesia	0	0	5	1
Philippines	1,692	4,361	4,747	2,898
Spain	374	197	308	220

Note:

These tables relate to registration and therefore do not identify where the individual was employed, in the national health service or independent sector, or even if the individual secured employment in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors have been employed in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [21050]

Mr. Byrne: The number of doctors employed in the national health service in England and the North East is shown in the table. Information is not available centrally for South Tyneside.

Number

	England	*North East*
1997	89,619	5,033
1998	91,837	5,048
1999	93,981	5,269
2000	96,319	5,489
2001	99,169	5,656
2002	103,350	5,823
2003	108,993	6,071
2004	117,036	6,524

Patient Communication

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* procedures her Department has in place to ensure patients who cannot communicate verbally are able to express themselves to staff. [20898]

Mr. Byrne: The Department in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission published "You Can Make A Difference", which is available on the Department's website last year at:

www.dh.gov.uk/equalityandhumanrights.

This leaflet aims to improve disabled people's experience of hospital services and gives practical suggestions of ways in which national health service staff can meet the needs of disabled service users, including those who cannot communicate verbally.

It is for local authorities and health service providers to determine how best to develop procedures and provide services to meet the needs of individuals.

Patient-led NHS

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the document Commissioning a Patient-led NHS, what formal consultations are required to be undertaken by the Thames Valley strategic health authority prior to the reconfiguration of primary care trusts. [20405]

Mr. Byrne: Proposals regarding the reconfiguration of primary care trusts were submitted to the Department last week by all 28 strategic health authorities (SHAs), and will shortly be considered by an external panel representing a wide range of stakeholder interests. If the proposals are found to meet the criteria originally specified in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS", published in July, they will be subject to a full, statutory public consultation. This public consultation will last three months, and will begin in December 2005.

In addition, all SHAs have consulted informally with a wide range of key stakeholder groups in drawing up their initial proposals.

Patients with Learning Difficulties

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what training *(a)* medical and *(b)* non-medical staff receive to be able to serve those with learning difficulties who use the NHS; and if she will make a statement; [20899]

(2) what steps she has taken to ensure that all those with a learning disability have that disability recorded on all medical records and NHS documents. [20900]

Mr. Byrne: The training of medical and non-medical staff in serving those with learning difficulties who use the national health service is a matter for the relevant professional bodies and the NHS. The Department is not responsible for setting curricula for health professional training, but we do share a commitment with statutory and professional bodies that all health professionals are trained, so that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality health service to all groups of the population with whom they deal.

The Department does discuss the overall direction of training content and will be working closely with the disability rights commission and other key stakeholders to assist the development and implementation of the disability content of a comprehensive equality and human rights learning and development programme for all NHS staff.

The Department has not made any specific steps to ensure that all those with a learning disability have that disability recorded on all medical records and NHS documents, However, we would expect this information to be put on records where it is a significant factor affecting their clinical care.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage change she expects in the number of physiotherapy graduates in 2006 since *(a)* 2005, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 1997. [21736]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 25 October 2005]:* Information is not collected on the number of graduates from physiotherapy courses.

The number of students entering training to become a physiotherapist in 1996–97 was 1,093. This had risen to 2,343 in 2003–04 and 2,351 in 2004–05.

Psychotherapy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the regulation of the profession of psychotherapy. [20179]

Jane Kennedy: The Government have been in discussion with the profession of psychotherapy for some time regarding the introduction of statutory regulation. Decisions about further progress will be taken once the review of non-medical regulation has reported to Ministers at the end of the year.

Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on rebranding in her Department and related agencies since 2003–04. [18407]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not changed its branding since 1999 therefore, no money has been spent on rebranding since 2003–04.

The Department currently has three executive and related agencies: NHS purchasing and supply agency, NHS connecting for health and medicines and healthcare products regulatory agency. These three agencies spent a total of approximately £108,000 on rebranding since 2003–04.

The Department's branding team developed a branding policy and guidelines for the Department's executive agencies and arms length bodies which were sent to the bodies following the publication of "An Implementation Framework for Reconfiguring the DH Arm's Length Bodies" (30 November 2004).

In 2003–04, the Department had three other executive and related agencies: NHS pensions agency, NHS estates, and NHS modernisation agency. All these agencies followed the standard national health service corporate identity and did not rebrand before they changed status or were dissolved.

Senior House Officers

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many stand-alone senior house officer posts there have been in the national health service in each year since 1997. [19677]

Mr. Byrne: Information on stand-alone senior house officer posts in the national health service is not collected centrally.

Skin Whitening Creams

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* scope and *(b)* scale of illegal sales of potentially toxic prescription-only skin whitening creams. [19935]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is aware that products containing medicines designated as prescription-only are being sold for cosmetic skin lightening purposes. Reports of their illegal sale have come to our attention through trading standards departments at local authorities and consumers who have suffered adverse reactions.

These products tend to be found on sale in markets and in small retail outlets in inner-city areas where there is a higher density of Afro Caribbean and Asian population.

Prescription-only medicines are potent by nature, and for this reason, their supply is restricted to patients who have been issued with a prescription from a doctor or another appropriate practitioner. In this way, their condition may be monitored. Sale and supply of these medicines outwith specified conditions can be a criminal offence and the MHRA will investigate all potential breaches of medicines law.

In April 2000, the Medicines Control Agency—this was prior to the merger with the Medical Devices Agency and emergence of the MHRA—conducted an initiative whereby a number of wholesalers/retailers of these products were identified and enforcement action was taken. In 95 per cent. of the visits, compliance was achieved and products withdrawn from the market.

Intelligence suggested that, following MHRA action, large scale wholesale operations ceased but "suitcase trade" persisted. This situation has been monitored in the intervening period and action has been taken in a number of instances, with reports from both trading standards and Her Majesty's Customs.

Sterile Services Units

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what standards she has set for the provision of services in sterile services units; and what steps she is taking to improve the delivery of sterile services within the NHS. [18459]

Jane Kennedy: The standards set for sterile services are contained in Core Standard C4 in "Annex A—Standards for Better Health of National Standards, Local Action—Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework 2005/06 to 2007/08", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Over £130 million has been spent on replacing equipment, improving working conditions in existing sterile services departments (SSDs) and buying new instruments to facilitate centralisation since April 2001. In order to sustain the improvement and enable the national health service to meet the existing standards on the reprocessing of instruments, many of the existing SSDs will be replaced completely.

Many NHS trusts are choosing to redevelop their sterile services by forming joint ventures with private sector providers. 18 such projects are under way, involving some 80 NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts.

Strategic Health Authorities (England)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the spending of each of the strategic health authorities in England has been in each of the last three years. [20169]

Mr. Byrne: Expenditure by strategic health authorities (SHAs) in England for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 is shown in the table.

£000

SHA	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	154,772	124,233	144,297
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	97,706	40,541	41,068
Birmingham and The Black Country	289,812	245,723	262,244
Cheshire and Merseyside	208,150	158,778	182,356
County Durham and Tees Valley	141,449	114,891	125,793
Cumbria and Lancashire	436,695	424,989	65,022
Dorset and Somerset	58,850	39,600	47,368
Essex	144,693	41,713	45,670
Greater Manchester	262,438	214,824	253,957
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	169,543	114,322	137,721
Kent and Medway	59,890	10,575	132,565
Leicestershire, Northants and Rutland	123,892	99,967	119,248
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	237,026	184,331	209,383
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	88,302	38,042	45,611
North Central London	196,310	175,194	188,929
North East London	224,019	213,821	236,880
North West London	219,237	172,930	184,199
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	103,762	84,153	91,082
Shropshire and Staffordshire	66,508	32,589	32,946
South East London	188,553	187,252	192,706
South West London	123,601	107,135	112,853
South West Peninsula	126,281	81,021	112,180
South Yorkshire	230,148	207,656	214,632
Surrey and Sussex	244,288	169,414	76,194
Thames Valley	167,899	116,581	131,107
Trent	189,976	144,961	166,619
West Midlands South	75,497	40,099	43,492
West Yorkshire	183,688	192,804	202,882
England Total	4,812,985	3,778,129	3,799,004

Notes:

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms, which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The figures have not been adjusted for inflation.
2. Figures have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning health care or other services.
3. The majority of expenditure of the SHAs is for education, training and research.
4. Reductions in expenditure between 2002–03 and 2003–04 are caused by the further transfer of commissioning from SHAs to primary care trusts.

Source:

Audited summarisation forms of SHAs.

Volunteering

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many volunteering positions her Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17874]

Jane Kennedy: The Department actively encourages volunteering, but information on the number of staff who have undertaken voluntary positions is not held centrally by the Department. Obtaining the data would incur disproportionate costs to the Department; it is therefore not possible to provide this information.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure as many out-patient and in-patient appointments as possible are booked through choose and book by the end of 2005; and what assessment she has made of the likelihood of this target being achieved. [18380]

Mr. Byrne: There is no target for choose and book. The Government's targets are for all patients to be offered the choice of at least four providers at the point of general practitioner referral and for patients to be able to book the date and time of their hospital appointment by the end of 2005. The choose and book service will greatly assist local health communities in achieving these targets. Where the choose and book service is not yet being used by this date, there will be other systems in place to ensure that patients receive a choice of at least four providers and can book the date and time of their appointment.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures her Department is taking to enable the national health service to meet the targets set by the EU Working Time Directive. [19676]

Mr. Byrne: The working time directive (WTD) was implemented for the vast majority of national health service staff groups in 1998 in accordance with regulations.

The Government negotiated an extension to the WTD for doctors in training to enable phased implementation from August 2004. We worked with the health professions and NHS employers to provide joint guidance and invested an extra £46 million to support WTD implementation, including 20 national pilots and the hospital at night project.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

All-postal Voting

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the Electoral Commission's opinion that all-postal voting should not be pursued for use in future statutory elections or referendums in the UK. [24042]

Ms Harman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 7 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 535W.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many offenders in breach of their antisocial behaviour orders *(a)* have been returned to court and *(b)* received sentences in the last 12 months. [20739]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The Court Proceedings Database held by the Home Office holds breach proceedings only where there has been a conviction.

Data on convictions for breach of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003. During this period my Department received notification of 1,892 persons receiving ASBOs in England and Wales. Of these, 793 were convicted of breaching their ASBO on one or more occasions. 437 received a custodial sentence for at least one of the breaches. The proportion of persons (356) who did not receive a custodial sentence is 45 per cent.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of offenders in breach of anti-social behaviour orders have not been committed to custody. [20742]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The Court Proceedings Database held by my Department holds breach proceedings only where there has been a conviction.

Data on convictions for breach of an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003. During this period the Home Office received notification of 1,892 persons receiving ASBOs in England and Wales. Of these, 793 were convicted of breaching their ASBO on one or more occasions. 437 received a custodial sentence for at least one of the breaches. The proportion of persons (356) who did not receive a custodial sentence is 45 per cent.

Asylum and Immigration Appeals

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of time was to process and determine immigration appeals from the date of being lodged to the date of hearing *(a)* before and *(b)* since 4 April 2005; and if she will make a statement. [23342]

Bridget Prentice: The latest provisional information available from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicates that immigration appeals, comprising both in-country and entry clearance cases, lodged *(a)* before the 4 April 2005, took on average 54 weeks from first being lodged to a decision being promulgated by an Immigration Adjudicator of the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA).

Immigration appeals arising from a claim refused by the Respondent prior to the 4 April 2005 were lodged first, in accordance with the Tribunal's procedure rules, with the decision maker (dependent on whether in-country or entry clearance) before being transferred to the IAA to be determined by an Immigration Adjudicator.

The latest provisional information available from the AIT indicates that an in-country immigration appeal, lodged *(b)* after the 4 April 2005, took on average seven weeks from being lodged to a decision being promulgated by an Immigration Judge of the AIT. Entry clearance appeals are not included within this information due to the current absence of a statistically significant sample of cases having been promulgated by the AIT in the period from 4 April to the end of June 2005.

Immigration appeals arising from a claim refused by the Respondent on or after the 4 April 2005 are lodged directly to the AIT in accordance with Rule 6 of "The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (Procedure) Rules 2005". Appellants bringing an appeal from outside the United Kingdom, following a refusal of entry clearance, can lodge their appeal to the entry clearance officer, who must forward the appeal to the AIT within 10 days of taking receipt.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many immigration appeals *(a)* lodged before and *(b)* lodged since 4 April 2005 were processed and determined by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal in (i) April, (ii) May, (iii) June, (iv) July, (v) August, (vi) September and (vii) to date in October; and if she will make a statement. [23343]

Bridget Prentice: The latest provisional figures available from the electronic database of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicate that the number of immigration appeal decisions, comprising both in-country and entry clearance cases, determined by the AIT in each month from April to the end of June 2005 is as follows:

Immigration appeals determined which were lodged prior to 4 April 2005

	Number
April 2005	2,875
May 2005	2,514
June 2005	2,488

Immigration appeals determined which were lodged after 4 April 2005

	Number
April 2005	0
May 2005	48
June	218

Statistical data confirming the numbers of immigration appeals determined in the period beyond June 2005 are not yet available.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what is the expected *(a)* date for completing and *(b)* average length of time for processing and determining for (i) asylum appeals, (ii) immigration appeals and (iii) visitor visa appeals lodged with the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal outstanding on 4 April 2005; and if she will make a statement. [23344]

Bridget Prentice: At present it is not possible to specify the average length of time taken to process and determine outstanding appeals received by the Immigration Appellate Authority prior to the 4 April 2005 and the commencement of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT), nor the estimated time for those cases to pass fully through the system, without incurring disproportionate costs.

Barristers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many trials were *(a)* cancelled and *(b)* postponed as a result of industrial action by barristers; and if she will make a statement. [23486]

Bridget Prentice: No trial was abandoned as a result of the action. From 3 October to 28 October there were 61 instances where a trial was affected by Bar action. Contingency plans were implemented and cases were adjourned and rescheduled for another day. Over a four week period anywhere between 2,000–3,000 trials are listed in the Crown court.

Coroners

Grant Shapps: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will review the operation of the coroners' system, with particular reference to a possible requirement on coroners to re-open cases following a court direction to do so. [23511]

Ms Harman: I am currently concluding a review of the operation of the coroners' system, which includes consideration of the powers of coroners and inquest procedures. I will make a statement in due course about the reforms the Government plans to bring forward.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list formal consultations being sponsored by her Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22581]

Bridget Prentice: Currently my Department and her agencies are running a total of seven formal consultations. They are listed in the following table.

Title of consultation	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
Focusing Judicial Resources Appropriately (DCA)	19 October 2005	20 January 2006
Civil and family court fee increases (Her Majesty's Courts Service; HMCS)	23 September 2005	18 November 2005
Proposed changes to civil appeal rules (DCA)	9 September 2005	2 December 2005
The Delegation of Powers by Justices' Clerks to Non Legally Qualified Staff in Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales (HMCS)	8 September 2005	1 December 2005
Gravesend County Court (HMCS)	1 September 2005	30 November 2005
Proposed merger of Shropshire local justice areas (HMCS)	19 August 2005	25 November 2005
The proposed closure of Wetherby Courthouse (HMCS)	16 August 2005	15 November 2005

Departmental Staff

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the rates of employee absence in her Department have been in each year since 1997. [21019]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the figures contained on the annual report "Analysis of Sickness Absence in the Civil Service" published by the Cabinet Office. Table A of the report gives details of both the average working days absence per year and the number of staff years on which that calculation is based. The most recent report for the calendar year 2003 was published on 1 November 2004, copies of which are available in the Library. This report and those for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 are available on the Cabinet Office website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/conditions_of_service/occupational_health/publications/index.asp

In respect of the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the published figures include the Department itself and its Associated Offices, the Court Service and the Public Guardianship Office. They do not include sickness absence data in respect of the former Magistrates Courts Services, which were merged with the Court Service in April 2005 to form Her Majesty's Court Service.

The Department remains committed to managing sickness absence effectively and has actively adopted the recommendations of the recently published "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

DNA Bioscience

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if she will take steps to ascertain the nature and level of the ISO certification of *(a)* DNA Diagnostic and *(b)* DNA Bioscience as providers of services to her Department; [22730]

(2) what representations have been received by the Department on the performance of DNA Bioscience; and if she will make a statement; [22744]

(3) what investigations have been initiated by the Department into DNA Bioscience. [22745]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member for Monmouth to my reply on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 8W. I am still investigating the matters raised in the hon. Member's questions, and I will write when I am in a position to do so.

Electoral Administration

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of Clause 23 of the Electoral Administration Bill on the ability of independent candidates to run with the ballot paper description of independent combined with the name of a registered political party. [23640]

Ms Harman: Clause 22 allows independent candidates to use the word 'Independent' or a description. Clause 23 specifies the type of description that can be used. The description must not be the same as the name or description of a registered political party, nor be so similar as to confuse with or lead an elector to associate the candidate with a registered political party.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of Clause 47 of the Electoral Administration Bill on the ability of registered political parties to run a candidate with a ballot paper description of a locality and party name combined. [23641]

Ms Harman: Under Clause 47 registered political parties are allowed to register up to five descriptions with the Electoral Commission. It would be up to the party to decide whether they wished to register a description of a locality and party name combined, and whether they wished to use this description on a ballot paper.

Expert Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what prerequisites are set for a person who gives evidence as an expert. [20170]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

In criminal law, where matters fall outside the ordinary knowledge of the court, the court may allow the opinions of an expert witness to be admitted as evidence. The decision whether or not to allow the evidence of an expert witness to be admitted rests with the court, which must be satisfied that the material comes within a recognised field of expertise and that the witness is properly qualified in the subject calling for expertise. The appropriate competence may be the result of formal study or training, experience, or both. It is for the jury to decide what weight ought to be placed on any expert evidence that has been admitted.

One exception to these general rules is that, under the Criminal Procedure (Insanity and Unfitness to Plead) Act 1991, a defendant shall not be acquitted on the grounds of insanity, or found unfit to plead, except on the evidence of two or more registered medical practitioners, at least one of whom is approved by the Secretary of State as having special experience in the diagnosis or treatment of mental disorder.

Hereditary Peers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the minimum age is for an hereditary peer to take up a seat in the House of Lords following a peers' by-election. [23642]

Ms Harman: The Standing Orders of the House of Lords (Standing Order No. 2) sets out clearly that no Lord under the age of 21 years shall sit in the House.

Judicial Appointments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many complaints have been made by unsuccessful applicants for judicial appointments on the grounds of race discrimination since 1 July 2003. [18953]

Ms Harman: Out of 35 complaints made during this period to the Commission for Judicial Appointments by unsuccessful applicants, five were on the grounds of race discrimination. Investigation of these complaints has yet to be completed

Jury Service

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have been called to jury service in England in each year since 2001. [22277]

Ms Harman: Between 2 April 2001 and 29 March 2002, 600,390 people were summoned for jury service of which 195,625 people actually attended court.

Between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003, 540,243 people were summoned for jury service of which 197,337 people attended court.

Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004, 501,198 people were summoned for jury service of which 182,052 people attended court.

Between 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, 477,122 people were summoned for jury service of which 186,015 attended court and between 1 April 2005 to 21 Oct 2005, 258,690 people have been summoned for jury service of which 104,774 have attended court to date.

Legal Aid Funding

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of legal aid in Northern Ireland has been in each year since 2002–03. [24072]

Bridget Prentice: The cost of legal aid in Northern Ireland each year since 2002–03 is set out as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	45.0
2003–04	49.8
2004–05	58.6

Limitation Act 1980

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will review the Limitation Act 1980 in respect of victims of child abuse suing for compensation. [16972]

Bridget Prentice: The Government announced its acceptance in principle of the recommendations made by the Law Commission in its 2001 report "Limitation of Actions" (Law Com 270), subject to further consideration of certain aspects, in July 2002.

The Law Commission recommended that a child abuse claim should be brought within three years of the date on which the claimant knew (or ought reasonably to have known) the facts giving rise to the cause of action; the identity of the defendant; and, that any injury, loss or damage was significant. As now, time would not run while the claimant was a minor. In addition, the court would have discretion to disapply the limitation period if it would be unjust not to allow the claim to proceed.

It is hoped that the remaining work on the recommendations will be concluded this autumn. We will then seek a legislative opportunity to introduce a Bill to reform the law.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many employees in her Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23377]

Bridget Prentice: No employees have requested training in these areas. Due to the sensitive issues involved in admitting training needs in these areas we have provided an anonymous process for staff to check their level of literacy and numeracy, which then points them towards local, free-of-charge providers of training to meet their needs.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of her Department. [23403]

Bridget Prentice: My Department has promoted the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy via presentations at our regional and area boards; at annual Learning At Work Week events; in the workplace via our local training co-ordinators; in our regional training centres; and on the departmental intranet. We will be re-launching these tests to the newly-created Her Majesty's Court Service and the rest of the Department shortly.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much her Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23424]

Bridget Prentice: The Department did not spend any money specifically on in-house literacy and numeracy training in the years 2002–05. However, some literacy issues are covered in our "Effective Writing", "Letter Writing" and "Minute Writing" in-house courses.

Policy Development Grants

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what reasons underlay the Government's proposals to bring forward legislation enabling a policy development grant to be treated as a donation. [23643]

Ms Harman: The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 specifically provides that any payment out of public funds received by a registered party shall be regarded as a donation received by the party from a permissible donor. However, Policy Development Grants are currently exempt from this provision. This measure will therefore achieve consistency in the reporting of public funds received by political parties, ensuring that Policy Development Grants, like the money received by opposition parties in Parliament and the devolved legislatures to assist them in carrying out their duties as opposition parties, are reported to the Electoral Commission and recorded on the register of donations.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Qualifications

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils have left school at age 16 years with less than five A*-C GCSE grades in *(a)* the constituency of Wimbledon, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [22392]

Jacqui Smith: The percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving less than five A*-C GCSE and equivalent[2] grades has been provided below for all years from 1997 to 2004.

Proportion of 15-year-olds with less than five A-C GCSE grades*

	Wimbledon parliamentary constituency	*Greater London*	*England*
1997	52.8	58.9	54.9
1998	51.8	57.1	53.7
1999	51.5	55.5	52.1
2000	49.6	54.5	50.8
2001	49.1	53.9	50.0
2002	49.1	51.5	48.4
2003	40.8	49.3	47.1
2004	41.1	47.0	46.3

[1] 15-year-old pupils at the beginning of the academic year (ie 31 August) who are age 16 when leaving compulsory education.
[2] Figures are for GCSE and equivalent qualifications for 2004. All previous years are for GCSE/GNVQ only.

Attainment Standards

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress towards raising standards of attainment in primary schools. [22689]

Jacqui Smith: Primary school standards are at their highest levels ever. The provisional results published in August show that 79 per cent. of 11-year-olds achieved the target level 4 of the National Curriculum in the 2005 Key Stage 2 English tests and 75 per cent. did so in mathematics. At Key Stage 1, 85 per cent. of 7-year-olds were assessed to have reached the target level 2 of the

National Curriculum in reading, 82 per cent. reached level 2 in writing and 91 per cent. reached level 2 in mathematics.

Since 1997, the proportion of 11-year-olds achieving level 4+ has risen by 16 percentage points in English and 13 percentage points in mathematics. This dramatic improvement follows a period when primary school standards had not improved for 50 years.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the June 2005 GCE AS/A-level examinations, with particular reference to the percentage required to secure a grade A. [22727]

Jacqui Smith: I congratulate pupils, teachers and their schools on their tremendous achievements in this summer's AS and A level examinations.

A level grades are awarded on the basis of a uniform mark scale (UMS). The grade A boundary is always set at 480 UMS marks out of a maximum total of 600.

Authorised Absence

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has given to head teachers regarding authorised absence during term time. [24304]

Jacqui Smith: The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 set out when a pupil's absence from school shall be treated as authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence includes those occasions where the pupil has been granted leave of absence by the school. Schools have discretion as to whether or not to grant leave of absence to allow pupils to go away on holiday.

The Government's view is that holidays in term time should be discouraged. There is evidence which indicates that absence from school can have a detrimental effect on a child's education and their attainment. The Government's view, therefore, is that all unnecessary absences from school, for reasons such as family holidays, should be avoided wherever possible.

Head teachers have access to the information and advice that my Department has issued on managing pupil attendance through our Behaviour and Attendance website (www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance). This includes material on handling requests for family holidays during term time and for extended holidays abroad.

Best Practice

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there is a structure in place for successful schools to share best practice with failing schools. [22721]

Jacqui Smith: The Department supports several programmes which enable successful schools to collaborate and share good practice with other schools including those which are underperforming and failing. These include the Leading Edge Partnership Programme; Primary Learning Networks; Excellence in Cities; the Leadership Incentive Grant; and the Specialist Schools Raising Attainment in Teaching and Learning Programme which funds specialist schools to work in partnership with others to raise standards.

In addition, the Department supports a number of tailored projects, for example through School Improvement Partnership Boards, to enable leading schools directly to support the recovery of a failing school. We are also encouraging more general collaboration to raise standards in schools through the development of Education Improvement Partnerships.

Bullying

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils left school because they were victims of bullying in *(a)* the Tees Valley and *(b)* the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [22068]

Jacqui Smith: Data on bullying among children and young people, including data on pupils who have left school because of bullying, are not collected centrally. Bullying cases appear to be reported more often now than before but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children.

However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying Charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines she has issued to teachers on how to *(a)* prevent and *(b)* report bullying; and if she will make a statement. [22738]

Jacqui Smith: We attach a high priority to helping teachers and school staff to reduce and respond to bullying, to encouraging pupils to report bullying and to helping staff respond when bullying has been reported: bullying is a serious problem which puts the emotional well-being and educational achievement of pupils at risk. Our guidance pack "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying Charter for Action and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying all offer advice to teachers on preventing and reporting bullying.

The "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence" pack was updated in September 2002. Its key message is for children to report bullying to someone they trust and not to suffer in silence. It offers valuable guidance to teachers on preventing and tackling bullying, the effects of bullying, how to respond to parents, and how to monitor bullying incidents. The Department is currently reviewing the material to provide teachers with the most up-to-date information.

In addition to the written resources we provide we have also held a number of workshops and conferences at which best practice in reducing and responding to bullying has been discussed and shared. In particular our "Make the Difference" conferences, held between November 2003 to June 2004, attracted over 5,000 heads and education staff.

The Department has also recently launched the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum resource—an intervention to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills from foundation stage to year 6. It is available to all primary schools and the evidence from the pilot suggests that it helps reduce bullying and promotes positive behaviour generally.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of cases of bullying in secondary schools in Leeds North West in each year since 2001. [23999]

Jacqui Smith: As data on bullying are not collected centrally we do not have statistics relating to incidents of bullying at secondary level in the Leeds North West area. Bullying cases appear to be reported more often now than before but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children.

However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying.

City Academies

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of *(a)* whether city academies will need to make a profit from community usage of their facilities in order to fund their VAT bills and *(b)* the effect charging fees for community use of city academies will have on community involvement; and if she will make a statement. [23562]

Jacqui Smith: The use of their facilities and any charges made are a matter for individual academies. VAT is not chargeable on the construction of academy buildings, or parts of these buildings, that are used exclusively for core education activities and/or for community use where no charge is made. VAT relief also applies to those parts of the building used for community activities where any charge is made, provided this does not exceed 10 per cent. of the total use.

Counselling

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of school children have access to a free counselling service by fully qualified counsellors on their school premises. [22324]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Departmental Initiatives

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the individual initiatives aimed at improving *(a)* participation, *(b)* attendance and *(c)* equality of opportunity introduced by her Department since 1997. [21801]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Education (Bedfordshire)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many appeals have been made against the allocation of school places in Bedfordshire local education authority in each year since 1997; and how many were upheld in each year. [16617]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

At the time of the admission appeals survey which collected figures for the year 2003/04 Bedfordshire local authority was contacted for an explanation of the large increase in primary school appeals between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The reason given was that it was due to the revised Admissions Code of Practice and changes in procedures within the authority due to infant class size limits.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: appeals by parents against non-admission of their children. Each academic year: 1996/97 to 2003/04

	Bedfordshire local authority				
		Appeals heard		*Appeals decided in parents favour*	
	Number of appeals lodged	*Number*	*Percentage*[1]	*Number*	*Percentage*[2]
Maintained primary					
1996/97	37	31	83.8	20	64.5
1997/98	43	30	69.8	15	50.0
1998/99	44	34	77.3	8	23.5
1999/2000	38	22	57.9	8	36.4
2000/01	50	28	56.0	6	21.4
2001/02	62	31	50.0	10	32.3
2002/03	53	26	49.1	3	11.5
2003/04[3]	163	95	58.3	37	38.9
Maintained secondary					
1996/97	175	150	85.7	80	53.3
1997/98	284	219	77.1	104	47.5
1998/99	353	312	88.4	79	25.3
1999/2000	299	225	75.3	89	39.6
2000/01	476	382	80.3	121	31.7
2001/02	391	283	72.4	91	32.2
2002/03	419	335	80.0	129	38.5
2003/04[3]	411	332	80.8	147	44.3

	England				
		Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents favour	
	Number of appeals lodged	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
Maintained primary					
1996/97	27,106	21,817	67	10,580	48
1997/98	30,868	20,178	65	9,564	47
1998/99	32,194	21,219	66	9,341	44
1999/2000	28,728	18,712	65	7,290	39
2000/01	27,106	17,505	65	6,208	35
2001/02	25,680	16,164	63	5,510	34
2002/03	22,410	13,760	61	4,540	33
2003/04[3]	20,810	13,180	65	4,340	33
Maintained secondary					
1996/97	40,021	29,472	74	9,234	31
1997/98	46,103	33,192	72	10,752	32
1998/99	53,739	38,961	73	12,642	32
1999/2000	60,454	43,943	73	14,182	32
2000/01	63,611	46,366	73	14,993	32
2001/02	69,210	49,981	72	16,218	32
2002/03	69,020	50,200	73	16,820	34
2003/04[3]	65,180	46,480	71	16,290	35

[1] Number of appeals heard by a committee expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals lodged by parents.
[2] Number of appeals decided in parents' favour expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals heard by a committee.
[3] A revised Code of Practice was issued in January 2003 within Bedfordshire local authority.
Source:
Annual Schools Census and Admission Appeals Survey

Education Funding (Hartlepool)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding the Hartlepool constituency has received from the *(a)* Excellence in Cities, *(b)* Education Action Zone and *(c)* Leadership Incentive Grant Scheme in each year since the scheme began. [23292]

Jacqui Smith: Hartlepool has been involved in the Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme since September 2000 as part of Phase Two. Hartlepool are also included in the Leadership Incentive Grant, following receipt of funding in April 2003. Although they did not participate in the Education Action Zones programme, they have an EiC Action Zone as part of the EIC programme.

The funding allocations to Hartlepool as part of the Excellence in Cities programme and the Leadership Incentive Grant, are shown in the following tables:

Excellence in Cities: Hartlepool funding allocations

	£
2000–01	495,532
2001–02	811,000
2002–03	859,094
2003–04	1,427,062
2004–05	1,617,968
2005–06	1,930,047

Leadership Incentive Grant: Hartlepool funding allocations

	£
2003–04	750,000
2004–05	780,000
2005–06	810,000

This investment is reflected in Hartlepool's EiC lifetime rate of improvement, in terms of five or more GCSEs A* to C. It is one of the highest of those involved in the programme, having gone from 35.7 per cent. in 2000, to 48.6 per cent. in 2004. Provisional results for 2005 show that attainment in Hartlepool has risen again, to 50.9 per cent.

Ethnic Minority Achievement

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the ethnic minority achievement element of the Standards Fund granted to *(a)* the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and *(b)* Wokingham district council was in each of the last three years; and what it is expected to be in each of the next two financial years; [23345]

(2) what the criteria for the allocation of the ethnic minority achievement element of the Standards Fund have been in each of the last three years; [23346]

(3) if she will list the local authorities whose funding for the ethnic minority achievement element of the Standards Fund will have been reduced by more than *(a)* 30 per cent. and *(b)* 40 per cent. between 2004 and 2007. [23347]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Changes to the distribution of the Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMAG) element of the Standards Fund were from introduced from 2004–05 to bring a better targeted, fairer and more sensible distribution to this grant. These changes were endorsed by the DfES "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils" consultation of 2003. Between 2005–06 and 2007–08, EMAG total funding will have increased by almost £10 million. In spite of these increases the reforms to the distribution of EMAG were not possible without losses to some authorities. No authority has been worse off as a result of these changes than 0.05 per cent. of their overall Education Formula Spending Share.

The allocations laid out here indicate the DfES contribution to EMAG for Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham. Allocations beyond 2007–08 have not been made.

Programme year	£
2003–04	
Windsor and Maidenhead	153,898
Wokingham	36,474
2004–05	
Windsor and Maidenhead	153,898
Wokingham	36,474
2005–06	
Windsor and Maidenhead	121,142
Wokingham	42,953
2006–07[1]	
Windsor and Maidenhead	88,387
Wokingham	49,467
2007–08[1]	
Windsor and Maidenhead	86,380
Wokingham	55,132

[1] Provisional DfEs contribution.

In 2003–04 to 2005–06 the DfES contribution was matched funded by local authorities at 50 per cent. grant rate.

The criteria for the distribution of EMAG are laid out in the Standards Fund Circular each year. For:

2003–04 Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG)

The criteria for allocations for each authority remained the same as for 2002–03. The 2002–03 grant reflected historic allocations to authorities dating from the evolvement in 1999–2000 of EMAG from the Home Office Section 11. (Section 11 had been based on a bidding process and did not necessarily reflect pupil numbers).

2004–05 Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG)

For 2004–05, the national total for EMAG was increased by 4 per cent. For 2004–05 the DfES introduced a phased move towards a new, needs based formula for allocating EMAG. This formula is based on the numbers of pupils from nationally underachieving ethnic groups and the numbers of pupils with a first language other than English, with a weighting for free school meals. Pupils are only counted once in the formula.

For some authorities the formula warranted a reduction in grant. Instead of increasing every authority's allocation by 4 per cent., the DfES froze the allocation at the 2003–04 level for those authorities who would otherwise have lost under the new formula. This was for one year only. Other authorities who were to gain began a move towards their new formula amount. All authorities, except the Isles of Scilly, received a total allocation of at least £35,000, including the local authority contribution. EMAG remained a ring-fenced grant to be spent only on raising the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

2005–06 Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG

For 2005–06, the national total for EMAG was increased by 4 per cent. The DfES continued to move towards the new, needs based, formula for allocating EMAG. This was again based on the numbers of pupils from nationally underachieving ethnic groups and the numbers of pupils with a first language other than English with a weighting for free school meals. Once again pupils are only counted once in the formula.

For some authorities this resulted in a reduction in grant. The DfES ensured that the allocation for those LEAs who would otherwise lose under the new formula was not reduced by more than 0.05 per cent. of their overall School Formula Funding Share. Other authorities continued to move towards their new formula amount. EMAG remained ring-fenced to be spent only on raising the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

The list of those authorities that have had reduction of over 30 per cent. and 40 per cent. is as follows. Those that have had a reduction of over 40 per cent. also appear in the over 30 per cent. list.

(a) Comparing the DfES contribution of the Ethnic Minority Achievement element (EMAG) of the Standards Fund of 2003–04 with the provisional DfES allocation of 2007–08, the following local authorities[1] have had their DfES contribution to EMAG cut by more than 30 per cent.:

Bedfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Bury
Cambridgeshire
Darlington
Hertfordshire
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Medway
North Lincolnshire
North Tyneside
Rotherham
South Tyneside
Wakefield
Warrington
Warwickshire
Windsor and Maidenhead
Worcestershire.

1 Excluding the Isles of Scilly.

(b) Comparing the DfES contribution of the Ethnic Minority Achievement element (EMAG) of the Standards Fund of 2003–04 with the provisional DfES allocation of 2007–08, the following local authorities[1] have had their DfES contribution to EMAG cut by more than 40 per cent.:

Bedfordshire
Buckinghamshire
Darlington
Hertfordshire
Kent
Lancashire
North Lincolnshire
North Tyneside
Rotherham
South Tyneside
Wakefield
Warwickshire
Windsor and Maidenhead.

[1] Excluding the Isles of Scilly.

Examinations

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has had with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on reform of the examination system; and if she will make a statement. [20593]

Jacqui Smith: Ministers in the Department have regular discussions with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on a range of issues, including reform of the examinations system. We have provided funding for the QCA to work with others to ensure we have an examination system fit for the 21st century.

Foundation Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, whether the additional flexibilities for trust schools would be available to foundation schools applying for additional freedoms under the Education Act 2002. [24280]

Jacqui Smith: All schools, as now, would be eligible to apply for additional freedoms under the Education Act 2002. Subject to legislation, we propose that trusts would be able to apply for such freedoms on behalf of all their schools.

GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of, and how many, 15-year-olds were entered for both the English and mathematics GCSE in each year since 1995. [23532]

Jacqui Smith: The number and percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] in England entered for both English and mathematics GCSE from 1995 to 2005 has been provided as follows.

Number and Percentage of 15-year-olds[1] entered for both English and mathematics GCSE

	Number of 15-year-olds (thousand)	*Percentage of 15-year-olds*
1995	514.5	86
1996	529.3	86
1997	525.2	86
1998	513.4	86
1999	524.6	87
2000	528.2	87
2001	550.3	91
2002	555.7	92
2003	572.5	92
2004	592.9	92
2005[2]	587.4	92

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.

Geography Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her assessment is of the *(a)* availability and *(b)* standards of the teaching of geography at (i) secondary and (ii) primary schools. [23888]

Jacqui Smith: As part of the national curriculum, geography teaching is a statutory subject for all pupils between the ages of five and 14. Geography can also be taken as an option at key stage 4.

The latest Ofsted report published on 19 October reveals an improvement in the quality of teaching of geography since 1998/99. The number of schools where teaching of geography is rated good or excellent has risen by 12 per cent. in primary schools and by 7 per cent. in secondary schools over this period. Geography also remains a popular choice at GCSE.

Gifted/Talented Young People

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate her Department has made of the number of gifted and talented young people in England. [23574]

Jacqui Smith: The national gifted and talented education programme is targeted broadly at the top 10 per cent. by ability aged 5 to 19 in every maintained school and college in England. Taking an average figure of 650,000 per year group nationally, we estimate that 65,000 in every year group fall potentially within the scope of the programme: perhaps 700,000 to 800,000 in total.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary schools nominated at least one pupil to join the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth in 2004–05. [23682]

Jacqui Smith: In the academic year 2004/05, 1,784 maintained secondary schools and 306 non-maintained secondary schools in England successfully nominated at least one pupil to the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth.

This compares with 795 maintained and 79 non-maintained schools in 2003/04.

Good Practice

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 213W, what assessment she has made of *(a)* whether the good practice published on www.teachernet.gov.uk/faithschools has been adopted and *(b)* the subsequent outcomes in terms of educational achievement against the Government's definition of educational achievement. [23091]

Jacqui Smith: We intend to update the Faith Schools website once a year with more examples of good practice that have been adopted in practice. We have recently asked the faith groups that provide maintained schools to provide the information which we will add to the current articles.

The examples on the website are intended to encourage faith schools to be inclusive and contribute to community cohesion. We do not gather information from individual schools on whether they have adopted the good practice or the impact on outcomes in terms of educational achievement. Evaluation of educational achievement is Ofsted's role.

Havering Borough

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure equal access to subject choice for *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A-level students of differing abilities in the London borough of Havering; and if she will make a statement. [22960]

Jacqui Smith: The national curriculum is designed to be suitable and accessible for all young people. The changes the Government made in 2004 to key stage 4 of the national curriculum were introduced so that all young people would have access to a broad and balanced curriculum as well as greater flexibility and choice, including the option to pursue more vocational courses. Similarly, reforms at advanced level provided for broader post-16 study including vocational options. Our 14–19 Education and Skills and the recently published Schools White Paper explain how we will further extend parental and pupil choice. In addition, London Challenge, with the London Learning and

Skills Councils and Government Office for London, has consulted on a London 14–19 learner offer, which will be published this autumn. This creates a common framework across London to ensure that all learners have access to a core offer, building on the proposals in the 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper.

The above proposals should benefit all young people including those in the London borough of Havering.

Head Teachers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to redefine the role of head teachers. [23147]

Jacqui Smith: Our recent White Paper clearly reflects our recognition of the increasing freedoms and challenging environment in which we want schools to operate. I have asked the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for its views on the extent to which the professional duties of teachers and the leadership group should be revised to reflect the focus on teaching and learning and the new professionalism agenda; the development of extended schools, including increased flexibilities in schools over opening times and out-of-hours activities; and the wider workforce. The STRB are intending to publish its advice in November. We will be considering the role of head teachers in the light of this advice.

Home Education

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has issued to local education authorities on the *(a)* frequency of and *(b)* level of detail required when monitoring cases of home education. [23236]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* My officials are drafting new guidelines for local authorities on home education, based on current local authority best practice. These will be issued in the spring. We anticipate that the guidelines will recommend that local authorities should normally make contact with home educators annually, although they may decide that individual children require more frequent monitoring. Each local authority makes its own decision about the information it requires from parents, but it should be sufficient to demonstrate that home educated children are making progress in line with their age, aptitude, ability, and any special needs they may have.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent representations she has received on the monitoring of children educated at home; and what requirements there are on a parent or carer to notify their relevant local authority on a decision to home educate. [23237]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* We are not aware of any recent representations on the tracking of children educated at home. My officials met with Education Otherwise Association Ltd. on 18 August 2004 to discuss the information sharing index, as provided for in the Children Act 2004, and any implications it may have for children educated at home.

There is currently no legal requirement for parents or carers to notify their local authority of their decision to home educate. However, where parents or carers are withdrawing a child from school in order to educate at home, they have a duty to inform the school in writing. The school, in turn, is legally required to inform the local authority within 10 school days.

Homework

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to revise Ofsted inspection criteria to include monitoring of the amount of homework set in schools to enable assessment of compliance with recommendations in her Department's publication Homework: Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools. [22857]

Jacqui Smith: The new school inspection framework requires inspectors to evaluate the school's provision in terms of its impact on achievement rather than compliance with non-statutory guidelines (in this case on the amount of homework provided). If the school's self-evaluation form, or other evidence, suggests that the school's policy on homework is contributing to unsatisfactory progress being made by pupils, inspectors may specifically examine this as part of the inspection. There are currently no plans to revise the inspection criteria in this regard.

Independent State Schools

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role local authorities will take in relation to the introduction of independent state schools. [23145]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Local authorities will have a new role as commissioners of education, rather than the direct providers of school places. In future all new or replacement schools will be self-governing (foundation), trust, voluntary aided or—where appropriate—academies. Where there is a need for a new or replacement school in an area the local authority will draw up a specification for the school and invite promoters to submit proposals. The local authority (or, in some cases, the schools adjudicator) will decide which proposals to approve, taking account of the views of parents and other stakeholders.

Existing community and voluntary controlled schools may also publish proposals to become self-governing (foundation) or trust schools. It will normally be for individual governing bodies to decide those proposals, but where the governing body has failed to take proper account of the views of a majority of parents about the acquisition of a trust or there are serious concerns about the impact of the acquisition of a trust on school standards, the local authority may refer the proposals to the schools adjudicator whose decision on them will be final.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the impact on future pay levels for teachers of the proposed new independent state schools. [23146]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Teachers at trust schools will be subject to the same legal provisions on pay and conditions as teachers at other maintained schools.

Labour Statistics

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many entry to employment trainees found employment in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005 to date; [22395]

(2) how many entry to employment places are available in England; how many have been taken up; and what the drop-out rate is. [22396]

Jacqui Smith: Entry to Employment (E2E) is the main programme for young people not yet ready to enter an Apprenticeship, employment or learning opportunities directly. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) guarantees all young people for whom E2E is appropriate, a place on the programme. This is in addition to the commitment that every 16 to 18-year-old can have a place in post-16 education and training.

The LSC collects data by academic year. In 2003/04 10,430 left E2E for employment. In 2004/05 11,226 left E2E for employment. Drop out information is not collected by the LSC. In 2004/05, 43 per cent. of E2E leavers went into a positive destination (Jobs, Further Education or Work Based Learning). This has risen from 35 per cent. in 2003/04. The number of places made available in England, in 2004/05 was 49,523. Of these 47,702 were taken up based on provisional 2004/05 data.

Learning Methods

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 15 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 488–9W, on learning methods, if she will define the term *(a)* multiplication facts and *(b)* multiplication tables. [23762]

Jacqui Smith: An example of a multiplication fact is 8 x 7 = 56. A set of facts make up what are commonly known as multiplication tables.

Music Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her assessment is of the *(a)* availability and *(b)* standards of the teaching of music at (i) secondary and (ii) primary schools. [23890]

Jacqui Smith: As part of the national curriculum, music is a statutory subject for all pupils between the ages of five and 14. Music can also be taken as an option at key stage 4.

Ofsted's annual report for 2004–05 continues to show a steady improvement in all aspects of primary school music, which is now good or very good in nearly six schools in 10. This picture is replicated at secondary level, where teaching at KS3 is now good or better in approaching three quarters of schools. Teaching is of significantly higher quality in both key stage 4 and post-16 courses.

Non-contact Time Obligations

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to assist schools with the lowest pupil funding level to secure adequate funding to enable statutory non-contact time obligations to be met; and if she will make a statement. [24615]

Jacqui Smith: Work force reform, including statutory non-contact time, is about more than additional funding. We have always said that contractual changes, such as planning, preparation and assessment (PPA), would require reform as well as investment and we firmly believe that much can be achieved within schools from redeploying existing resources to introduce and sustain the changes. Schools will need to consider their own circumstances and the opportunities available to them—some strategies may be easier to implement than others. There is no "one size fits all" approach and schools will need to decide what strategies would be the most appropriate for them.

In introducing new arrangements for school funding from 2006–07, we intend to deliver greater certainty and stability for schools. Our intention is to set the minimum funding guarantee for 2006–07 at a level which covers anticipated average cost pressures on schools, including the full-year costs of implementing work force reform, subject to a final assessment of those pressures. We will announce details of authorities1 funding allocations in the late autumn together with the level of the guarantee.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is a statutory requirement in each case. [20144]

Jacqui Smith: My Department sponsors three advisory non-departmental public bodies: the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy (IAGTP), the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) and the Teachers' TV Board of Governors. The Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy does not have a statutory base but publishes its advice and recommendations to the Government in an annual report which is announced in Parliament via a written ministerial statement. There is no statutory requirement to do so.

The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) has a statutory base but is not under a statutory duty to publish any report to the Government. However the Prime Minister and Secretary of State are under a statutory duty to publish a report from the STRB. There is no requirement for the STRB to publish an annual report or to lay a report before Parliament.

The Teachers' TV Board of Governors does not have a statutory base but does publish an annual report that contains its advice to Government on its website at www.ttvboard.org. It does not lay an annual report before Parliament and there is no statutory requirement to do so.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20145]

Jacqui Smith: My Department sponsors three Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies: the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy (IAGTP), the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) and the Teachers' TV Board of Governors. The information requested is listed as follows:

(a) None.

(b) The School Teachers' Review Body conducts consultation with representative bodies within several categories prescribed under the Education Act 2002.

(c) None.

(d) The Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy, School Teachers' Review Body and the Teachers' TV Board of Governors.

(e) None.

(f) The Teachers' TV Board of Governors publishes summaries of its meetings on its website at www.tttv.board.org

Ofsted

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of which additional resources may be required by Ofsted to enable it to investigate concerns raised by parents as proposed in her recent White Paper. [23947]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* We are working with Ofsted to ensure that these proposals are implemented effectively and that the resource requirements are considered as part of this process.

Parents' Councils

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanisms she will introduce to resolve potential disputes between governing bodies and the proposed parents' councils. [23337]

Jacqui Smith: We expect that governing bodies and parent councils will generally have a constructive relationship, and this has been the experience in a recent pilot project.

Parent councils are a structure for parents to raise issues and concerns, and for the governing body to consult with parents. Governing bodies will remain responsible and accountable in law for conducting the school. If the parent council were to disagree with a governing body decision, it would have access to the same complaints routes as an individual parent.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers she intends to give to the parents' councils proposed in her recent White Paper. [23341]

Jacqui Smith: Parent councils are intended to act as a formal channel for parental representation. Governing bodies will remain responsible and accountable in law for conducting the school and so parent councils will have a consultative and advisory role, rather than having decision-making powers.

In the broader context of the new duty on governing bodies to have regard to parents' views, parent councils are a means to strengthen the voice of parents, and to enable more parents to express their opinions and influence decisions, rather than a fundamental change in how decisions are taken within a school. Governing bodies will be expected to use the parent council (where there is one) as a means to seek views, as well as to listen if it raises its own issues and ideas. The new Ofsted self-assessment and inspection arrangements require schools to assess and demonstrate how well they listen to and act on parents' views.

Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will reconsider her decision not to award Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley, a refurbishment grant; and for what reasons the refurbishment grant application was unsuccessful; [22608]

(2) for what reasons Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley, was not eligible for the building schools for the future initiative; what assessment her Department has made of the number of schools which are ineligible for funding due to a high level of exam performance but which require refurbishment; and if she will make a statement. [22609]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* Every secondary school in the country is eligible for Building Schools for the Future (BSF) investment. It is a strategic programme that aims to rebuild or renew all secondary schools that need it over 15 years, subject to future public spending decisions. Local authorities and schools are being prioritised in accordance with the published criteria of relative educational and social need, based on the geographical groupings of schools proposed by local authorities. Prince Henry's Grammar School is currently prioritised to receive BSF investment in waves 13 to 15 of this programme.

Building Schools for the Future, however, is a long-term programme that represents around only 40 per cent. of our annual capital investment in schools. The majority of our remaining support is allocated directly to both authorities and schools to enable them to address their most pressing needs; including those schools which require refurbishment but are not prioritised for investment in the early years of BSF. Local authorities and schools prioritise the use of this funding in accordance with their locally prepared asset management plans. Leeds and its schools have been allocated over £70 million over the following three years to prioritise, and Prince Henry's Grammar School has been directly allocated £412,000 in devolved formula capital over the following three years.

With regard to Leeds' unsuccessful application for Targeted Capital Fund support for this school, our funding decisions are final, and my officials have already provided direct feedback to the authority as to why this particular application did not succeed in what is always a highly competitive bidding process.

Pupil Attainment

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils left school at 16 years with fewer than five A*-C GCSE grades in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire in each of the last five years. [24314]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is given in the follow table.

Percentage of 15-year-olds[1] achieving less than five A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2]*

	Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency	*Lancashire local authority*
2000	36.6	50.4
2001	36.7	49.9
2002	33.8	48.3
2003	35.4	46.6
2004[3]	38.2	46.2

[1] 15-year-old pupils at the beginning of the academic year (ie 31 August).
[2] Figures are for GCSE and equivalent qualifications for 2004. All previous years are for GCSE/GNVQ only.
[3] 2004 is the latest available year for which figures are available at both parliamentary constituency and local authority level.

Pupil Expulsion

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are used to expel a pupil in *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* upper schools. [22961]

Jacqui Smith: It is for each head teacher to decide when it is appropriate to exclude a pupil from school permanently, taking account of all the circumstances of the situation including the need to balance the interests of the pupil against those of the whole school community.

Head teachers must also have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State, which is applicable equally to all maintained schools, regardless of phase. The guidance states that a decision to exclude a pupil should be taken only in response to serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy and if allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school. Permanent exclusion will usually be the final step following a wide range of other strategies that have been tried without success. There are, however, some exceptional cases, which are listed in the guidance, where it is appropriate for a head teacher to exclude a pupil permanently for a first or one-off offence.

Pupil Grouping

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which Minister commissioned the review of the literature on the effects of pupil grouping published recently. [24515]

Jacqui Smith: The literature review on the effects of pupil grouping, which was published on 27 October 2005, is part of an ongoing research project on pupil grouping which was approved by my right hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, South (Mr. Clarke) and commissioned by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Pupil-teacher Ratio

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if the Government will take steps to employ more teachers to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio. [22720]

Jacqui Smith: Teacher numbers are now at their highest level since 1981. Improved pay and conditions and an attractive package of incentives for newly qualified teachers, supported by the recruitment activities of the Training and Development Agency for Schools, have raised the status of the profession and contributed to these record numbers. In primary schools, there was a drop in the number of pupils per qualified teacher between 2004 and 2005, from 22.7 to 22.5. In secondary schools, the number of pupils per qualified teacher decreased from 17.0 in 2004 to 16.7 in 2005. The overall PTR in maintained schools fell from 17.7 to 17.4.

It is for schools to decide their strategies and priorities for workforce deployment and many schools are employing staff other than teachers to support teachers and pupils as part of a professional school team. There are more support staff than ever before working in our schools, 268,600 (FTE), more than 25,000 more than there were a year ago. The number of FTE teaching assistants in particular has risen by over 11 per cent. this year—and the figure has more than doubled since 1997.

The large rise in support staff has led to an improvement in the pupil:adult ratio (PAR) in both the primary and secondary phases and, hence, overall. The primary PAR fell from 17.9 in 1997 to 13.4 in 2005, and in secondary from 14.5 to 12.2.

All figures obtained from the Annual Schools Census.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions her Department has had with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority regarding the Futures: Meeting the Challenge document; [23357]

(2) whether the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document Futures: Meeting the Challenge reflects the policy of her Department; [23448]

(3) on whose authority the publication of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document Futures: Meeting the Challenge was approved. [23450]

Jacqui Smith: The QCA, a non-departmental body with a statutory remit to review the curriculum, independently published their Futures document in October. They keep the Department informed of the progress they are making on this work, and we are continuing to monitor developments with interest.

School Admissions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what meetings she has had with representative groups to discuss proposed changes to schools' admissions policies; and if she will make a statement. [22739]

Jacqui Smith: During the last year, Ministers have talked with a wide range of groups, representing parents, schools, local authorities and other interested parties; and have listened to their views of the school admissions system. We know that what parents want is the choice of good schools; and what most schools want is the freedom to admit a wide range of pupils. This has informed our proposals in the White Paper.

On 18 October, we completed consultation on the revised statutory School Admissions Code of Practice, to which admission authorities for schools must 'have regard'. The Code provides guidance on good and poor practice within the school admissions process. The Secretary of State will be considering responses to the consultation before determining the final content of the Code.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what process a new or expanded school would have to adopt under the proposals in the White Paper if it wished to vary its admissions procedure after the first three years of operation. [23331]

Jacqui Smith: New or expanded schools that wish to vary their admission arrangements, after the first three years of operation, would be able to do so under the normal process used by all admission authorities to determine admission arrangements.

Legislation requires admission authorities to consult annually over their proposed admission arrangements. If agreement cannot be reached locally, another admission authority or a school can object to the independent schools adjudicator, if they believe that the arrangements are not in the best interests of local parents and children.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will seek to legislate to define acceptable admissions criteria for schools. [23332]

Jacqui Smith: We have recently consulted on a revised School Admissions Code of Practice, which contains a list of acceptable and appropriate admissions criteria.

All admission authorities must have regard to the statutory guidance in the code, when determining their admission arrangements. Local authorities are encouraged to object to the independent schools adjudicator, if a school's proposed admission arrangements are not in line with the code, or are not in the best interests of local parents and children.

We have amended legislation, however, to include aspects of admissions which we think must always be followed, such as giving priority to looked after children and no longer allowing schools to introduce selection by aptitude in technology.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many appeals there were against allocation of school places in the London borough of Merton in each year since 1997; and how many were upheld. [22385]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: appeals by parents against non-admission of their children, each academic year: 1996/97 to 2003/04 Merton local authority

Maintained primary

	Number of appeals lodged	Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
		Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
1996/97	387	253	65.4	128	50.6
1997/98	273	194	71.1	73	37.6
1998/99	374	227	60.7	107	47.1
1999/2000	240	124	51.7	38	30.6
2000/01	229	148	64.6	43	29.1
2001/02	169	106	62.7	12	11.3
2002/03	130	74	56.9	12	16.2
2003/04	102	60	58.8	9	15.0

Maintained secondary

	Number of appeals lodged	Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
		Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
1996/97	83	51	61.4	22	43.1
1997/98	86	49	57.0	16	32.7
1998/99	143	89	62.2	23	25.8
1999/2000	140	102	72.9	31	30.4
2000/01	134	96	71.6	37	38.5
2001/02	112	68	60.7	20	29.4
2002/03	170	90	52.9	27	30.0
2003/04	173	90	52.0	26	28.9

[1] Number of appeals heard by a committee expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals lodged by parents.
[2] Number of appeals decided in parents' favour expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals heard by a committee.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census and Admission Appeals Survey

School Closures

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have been designated for closure in each of the last eight years, broken down by *(a)* local education authority, *(b)* type of school and *(c)* number of pupils in the school. [19695]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have closed in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* local education authority, *(b)* sector and *(c)* size. [23597]

Jacqui Smith: The information is provided in the tables. The figures include closures of mainstream schools maintained by local authorities and maintained special schools but exclude independent schools.

The figures include schools that have closed as a result of an amalgamation or local reorganisation of schools and also those where a new school has opened in their place e.g. a school with a religious character, an Academy or a fresh start school. Figures relate to calendar years. Proposed school closures for 31 December 2005 are shown separately and included in the total.

Since September 1999 decisions on school closures have been determined locally by the LA (for proposals they published where there were no objections), the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or, where the SOC have been unable to agree a unanimous decision, the independent schools adjudicator. Ministers have no role in the process.

(a) Closures by local authority

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (January to October)	2005 proposed closures	Total
Barnet	1	1	—	—	5	3	—	10
Barnsley	—	9	—	—	—	7	—	16
Bath and North East Somerset	—	2	—	—	1	7	—	10
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2
Bexley	—	3	1	6	3	—	—	13
Birmingham	11	3	4	16	16	6	—	56
Blackburn with Darwen	2	—	2	2	2	1	—	9
Blackpool	—	2	1	—	—	4	—	7
Bolton	—	—	6	5	2	—	—	13
Bournemouth	2	—	—	2	2	—	—	6
Bracknell Forest	—	—	2	—	2	2	—	6
Bradford	74	—	—	—	1	2	—	77
Brent	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Brighton and Hove	—	2	—	—	—	1	—	3
Bristol City of	10	—	4	1	1	2	—	18
Bromley	1	—	—	2	1	1	—	5
Buckinghamshire	3	5	7	2	—	—	—	17
Bury	1	—	1	8	2	—	—	12
Calderdale	1	—	2	—	3	—	—	6
Cambridgeshire	2	3	4	6	2	—	—	17
Camden	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	4
Cheshire	5	1	—	6	5	7	—	24
Cornwall	—	2	3	2	1	4	—	12
Coventry	—	1	6	2	1	2	—	12
Croydon	2	—	—	2	2	2	—	8
Cumbria	2	4	9	2	4	5	—	26
Darlington	6	—	—	4	5	4	—	19
Derby	3	1	—	1	4	—	—	9
Derbyshire	—	2	5	3	—	—	—	10
Devon	2	—	—	2	3	8	—	15
Doncaster	—	4	5	8	1	1	—	19
Dorset	—	—	—	2	3	5	—	10
Dudley	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Durham	—	—	7	2	2	4	—	15
Ealing	—	—	1	2	1	—	—	4
East Riding of Yorkshire	—	—	3	1	4	2	—	10
Enfield	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Essex	13	11	5	9	3	2	—	43
Gateshead	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Gloucestershire	6	4	—	1	—	6	—	17
Greenwich	2	10	3	—	2	2	—	19
Hackney	1	1	2	3	—	3	—	10
Halton	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	8
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	—	3	2	—	—	—	5
Hampshire	1	6	1	1	5	2	—	16
Haringey	8	—	3	1	5	—	—	17
Harrow	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	3
Hartlepool	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2
Havering	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	4
Herefordshire	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	2
Hertfordshire	4	12	3	5	3	10	4	41
Hillingdon	—	—	1	—	1	2	—	4
Hounslow	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	9
Isle of Wight	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Isles of Scilly	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	5
Islington	—	1	3	—	3	—	—	7
Kent	3	2	3	6	4	7	—	25
Kingston upon Hull City of	—	4	2	1	—	—	—	7
Kirklees	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Knowsley	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
Lambeth	2	10	4	2	—	1	—	19
Lancashire	2	8	12	—	6	5	—	33
Leeds	1	1	5	—	24	12	—	43
Leicester	1	2	—	—	3	—	2	8
Leicestershire	1	2	—	1	2	—	—	6
Lewisham	—	1	—	1	1	1	—	4

(a) Closures by local authority

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (January to October)	2005 proposed closures	Total
Lincolnshire	—	2	—	2	2	2	—	8
Liverpool	3	12	14	14	13	1	—	57
Luton	2	3	—	4	2	—	—	11
Manchester	9	7	2	5	5	—	—	28
Medway	—	1	2	2	—	4	—	9
Merton	—	—	14	—	—	—	—	14
Middlesbrough	1	—	6	8	—	—	—	15
Milton Keynes	4	2	—	1	3	—	—	10
Newcastle upon Tyne	—	4	4	—	1	3	—	12
Newham	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
Norfolk	4	3	—	2	—	—	—	9
North East Lincolnshire	2	2	—	2	—	—	—	6
North Lincolnshire	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	4
North Somerset	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
North Tyneside	3	4	4	—	—	—	—	11
Northamptonshire	2	4	4	2	18	9	—	39
Northumberland	3	—	—	4	3	3	1	14
Nottingham	1	2	3	2	2	9		19
Nottinghamshire	4	37	6	7	5	3	4	66
Oldham	—	6	6	3	2	2	—	19
Oxfordshire	1	3	3	14	—	1	—	22
Peterborough	1	—	—	—	5	—	—	6
Plymouth	2	—	3	—	—	4	—	9
Poole	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Reading	1	2	1	—	1	—	—	5
Redbridge	1	10	—	—	—	2	2	15
Redcar and Cleveland	2	3	—	4	2	4	—	15
Richmond upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Rochdale	—	6	—	1	2	2	—	11
Rotherham	—	2	—	2	1	2	—	7
Rutland	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Salford	13	7	—	—	1	5	—	26
Sandwell	12	2	2	—	1	3	—	20
Sefton	1	1	2	1	3	11	—	19
Sheffield	3	—	8	5	—	1	—	17
Shropshire	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
Slough	2	2	—	—	3	—	—	7
Solihull	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2
Somerset	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	3
South Gloucestershire	—	3	—	—	3	—	—	6
South Tyneside	3	—	2	7	2	—	—	14
Southampton	6	—	—	4	—	—	—	10
Southend-on-Sea	—	2	—	4	2	4	—	12
Southwark	1	—	—	1	—	1	1	4
St. Helens	2	—	2	—	4	2	—	10
Staffordshire	2	—	2	1	6	7	—	18
Stockport	2	2	—	—	3	9	—	16
Stockton-on-Tees	—	2	4	—	2	2	—	10
Stoke-on-Trent	5	4	5	5	7	2	—	28
Suffolk	2	—	2	—	3	2	—	9
Sunderland	—	5	7	3	6	—	—	21
Surrey	2	7	3	3	7	2	—	24
Sutton	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	3
Swindon	10	—	—	—	2	—	—	12
Tameside	—	—	4	3	—	1	—	8
Telford and Wrekin	1	2	—	—	4	8	—	15
Thurrock	—	—	—	3	4	2	2	11
Torbay	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	3
Tower Hamlets	—	2	5	2	—	1	—	10
Trafford	—	2	4	—	—	—	—	6
Wakefield	1	7	6	4	1	2	—	21
Walsall	4	—	—	3	—	4	2	13
Waltham Forest	—	1	2	7	2	—	—	12
Wandsworth	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	4
Warrington	1	2	7	—	—	—	—	10
Warwickshire	4	5	—	1	2	4	—	16
West Berkshire	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
West Sussex	2	1	—	2	15	—	—	20
Wigan	5	—	1	—	4	2	—	12
Wiltshire	—	—	2	3	4	8	1	18
Windsor and Maidenhead	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
Wirral	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	3
Wokingham	—	1	2	1	—	1	—	5
Wolverhampton	6	1	5	—	3	—	—	15
Worcestershire	2	12	—	1	3	3	—	21
York	5	3	5	—	4	—	—	17
Total	328	337	293	277	318	284	19	1,856

(b) Closures by sector

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (January to October)	2005 Proposed closures	Total
Middle deemed Primary	6	4	3	—	9	5	—	27
Middle deemed Secondary	60	18	7	11	21	8	—	125
Nursery	15	15	15	11	10	11	—	77
Primary	182	236	220	207	219	220	19	1,303
Secondary	27	29	29	24	20	16	—	145
Special	38	35	19	24	39	24	—	179
Total	328	337	293	277	318	284	19	1,856

(c) Closures by size

Number of pupils	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 (January to October)	2005 proposed closures	Total
Not available	328	337	5	1	1	1	—	673
1–100	—	—	64	65	71	69	2	271
101–500	—	—	212	195	231	208	17	863
501–1,000	—	—	11	15	13	5	—	44
1,001–1,500	—	—	1	1	2	1	—	5
Total	328	337	293	277	318	284	19	1,856

Note:
Pupil data are not available prior to 2002

School Discipline

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many serious incidents of violence against teachers have been recorded in *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools in each year since 1997. [22372]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

School Meals

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department's recent announcement concerning kitchens in new schools will apply to those schools approved for construction, but not yet constructed, before the announcement was made. [20532]

Jacqui Smith: The School Meals Review Panel, in its report "Turning the Tables: Transforming School Food" published on 3 October 2005, recommended that schools should aspire to achieve the highest quality of provision, which it defined as a hot meal, cooked on-site from fresh and seasonal ingredients. It is preferable if the kitchens are on the school premises, but this may not be sensible in all circumstances. These decisions are, rightly, made locally, and my Department does not generally approve school designs individually, which are procured by local authorities or schools. We expect all schools and authorities to consider carefully and seriously our ambitions when building or refurbishing schools, whether they were started before or after our announcements on raising the standards of school food.

School Expulsions

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils left school due to expulsion in *(a)* the Tees Valley and *(b)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [22321]

Jacqui Smith: Requested information relating to the number of pupils who have been permanently excluded from school is given in the tables.

Figures for the number of permanent exclusions during 2004/05 academic year should be available in June 2006.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1,2]: number and percentage of permanently excluded pupils—1997/98 to 2003/04

	1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000	
	Number	Percentage[4]	Number	Percentage[4]	Number	Percentage[4]
Tees Valley	164	0.14	111	0.09	109	0.09
841 Darlington	29	0.19	26	0.17	27	0.17
805 Hartlepool	34	0.20	17	0.10	15	0.09
806 Middlesbrough	23	0.09	17	0.07	3	0.01
807 Redcar and Cleveland	35	0.13	26	0.10	37	0.14
808 Stockton-on-Tees	43	0.13	25	0.07	27	0.08

	2000/01[3]		2001/02[3]		2002/03[3]		2003/04[3]	
	Number	Percentage[4]	Number	Percentage[4]	Number	Percentage[4]	Number	Percentage[4]
Tees Valley	96	0.08	108	0.09	113	0.10	135	0.12
841 Darlington	23	0.15	7	0.04	9	0.06	22	0.14
805 Hartlepool	22	0.13	32	0.19	40	0.24	44	0.27
806 Middlesbrough	7	0.03	13	0.05	9	0.04	18	0.09
807 Redcar and Cleveland	29	0.11	33	0.13	32	0.13	33	0.13
808 Stockton-on-Tees	15	0.05	23	0.07	23	0.07	18	0.06

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[3] Figures are as confirmed by local authorities via the data checking exercise.
[4] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1,2]: number and percentage of permanently excluded pupils—1997/98 to 2003/04

Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	*Number*	*Percentage[4]*
1997/98	22	0.14
1998/99	10	0.06
1999/2000	13	0.08
2000/01[3]	6	0.04
2001/02[3]	10	0.07
2002/03[3]	6	0.04
2003/04[3]	8	0.06

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Figures are as confirmed by local authorities via the data checking exercise.

[4] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many youths who have been expelled from school are without a school place in *(a)* the Tees Valley and *(b)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency. [22322]

Jacqui Smith: We do not hold information centrally on the numbers of excluded pupils who are without a place in school. However, from September 2002 all local authorities (LAs) have been committed to providing suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixteenth school day of their exclusion. Since then all but a handful of LAs have met this commitment and the Department works with any that are not meeting it to help them achieve it.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been expelled from *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools in each year since 1997. [22371]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Figures for the number of permanent exclusions during 2004/05 academic year should be available in June 2006.

Maintained primary and secondary schools [1] number of permanently excluded pupils by denomination of schools—1997/98 to 2003/04

England

	Non-denominational[2]		*Primary Faith schools[2]*		*All schools*	
	Number	*Percentage [3]*	*Number*	*Percentage [3]*	*Number*	*Percentage[3]*
1997/98	1,210	0.04	330	0.03	1,540	0.03
1998/99	1,100	0.03	270	0.02	1,370	0.03
1999/2000	980	0.03	250	0.02	1,230	0.03
2000/01 [4]	1,150	0.04	290	0.02	1,440	0.03
2001/02 [4]	1,190	0.04	270	0.02	1,450	0.03
2002/03 [4]	1,070	0.0	230	0.02	1,300	0.03
2003/04 [4]	1,030	0.03	230	0.02	1,270	0.03

	Non-denominational2		*Secondary Faith schools2*		*All schools*	
	Number	*Percentage3*	*Number*	*Percentage3*	*Number*	*Percentage 3*
1997/98	8,710	0.35	1,480	0.24	10,190	0.33
1998/99	7,680	0.31	950	0.15	8,640	0.28
1999/2000	6,030	0.22	690	0.14	6,710	0.21
2000/01 [4]	6,500	0.24	810	0.16	7,310	0.23
2001/02 [4]	6,920	0.25	830	0.16	7,740	0.24
2002/03 [4]	6,810	0.24	870	0.17	7,690	0.23
2003/04 [4]	7,340	0.26	980	0.19	8,320	0.25

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Religious character of schools has been sourced from Edubase—the Department's database of educational establishments.
[3] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils in schools of same denomination.
[4] Estimates based on incomplete pupil level data.
Note:
Totals may not appear to equal the sum of component parts because numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

School Playing Fields

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields have been sold off since 1997 in Gravesham. [19816]

Jacqui Smith: Until October 1998, only grant-maintained schools needed to obtain the Secretary of State's consent before disposing of any land, including playing fields. Prior to October 1998, there was no regulation of the sale of school playing fields at local authority controlled schools. If a local authority wanted to sell a school playing field there was nothing to stop it and it could spend the sale proceeds as it wished.

Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 was introduced in October 1998 to stop the indiscriminate sale of school playing fields. Since October 1998 we have ensured that only sports pitches that are surplus to the needs of local schools and their communities are sold and all the money is ploughed back into improving sports or educational facilities.

Since 1997, two applications involving the loss of an area of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch have been approved in Gravesham. An application to sell an off-site playing field at Chantry Primary School in Gravesend was approved in November 2000. The money raised from the sale has been used to improve the school's on-site sports provision. More recently, in October 2005, we approved an application to dispose of the site, including the playing fields, of the former Southfields School in Gravesend. As part of the proposed development of this site, the purchaser has agreed that the playing fields will be retained, and improved, for use by local schools and the community.

School Sport

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the value of school playing fields sold in England in each of the last five years. [23535]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

However, the number of approved applications to dispose of an area of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch in England in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Number
2000/01	28
2001/02	29
2002/03	19
2003/04	13
2004/05	11

School Teaching Methods

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whom she has asked to conduct the research into ability grouping referred to in her Department's White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All"; [23591]

(2) what the terms of reference were for the research into ability grouping referred to in her Department's White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All"; [23590]

(3) whether the research into ability grouping referred to in her Department's White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", will include an evaluation of *(a)* within-class ability grouping, *(b)* between-class ability grouping and *(c)* accelerated and enriched learning programmes for the gifted and talented; [23589]

(4) if she will ensure that the research into ability grouping referred to in the White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", will include evaluation of research by James A. Kulik of the University of Michigan. [23889]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has commissioned a research project on pupil grouping from a consortium of four universities: the University of Brighton, the University of Sussex, the University of Cambridge, and the Institute of Education at the University of London.

The terms of reference for the research project were to investigate the effects of different forms of organisational (between class) grouping and within class grouping on pupil learning in primary and secondary schools. This includes analysis of grouping practices in relation to gifted and talented pupils, as well as pupils with other characteristics.

The project consists of an extended literature review, which was published on 27 October 2005, and a fieldwork phase, which is expected to report in early 2006. The literature review references research by James A. Kulik and Chen-Lin C. Kulik.

School Travel

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government is taking to encourage children to walk to and from school; and if she will make a statement. [22075]

Jacqui Smith: The Government wants to reduce the number of cars on the school run and make it possible for more pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport in safety. The Departments of Transport and for Education and Skills are, through their "Travelling to School" project, providing support to all local authorities in England to help them achieve this.

Schools

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who a local authority will be required to consult before deciding on a request to set up a new school; and whether that consultation will include *(a)* parents and *(b)* pupils at other schools that might be affected by such a proposal. [23333]

Jacqui Smith: Under the proposals in the White Paper, the local authority will be under a duty to be responsive to a request from parents to set up a new school, and, where the proposals have support, to offer consultancy support to help them develop the proposals. The local authority will decide whether the proposal to establish a new school should be taken

forward, or whether the demands can be better met in other ways. Parents will have a right of appeal to the schools adjudicator if their proposals are rejected.

The details of these arrangements, including consultation requirements, will be set out in regulations and guidance, on which we will consult following the introduction of the Education Bill.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria she will adopt to decide whether an organisation is inappropriate to run a trust school. [23334]

Jacqui Smith: All trusts will by law be charities and will be subject to regulation by the Charities Commission. We will require trusts to have specific charitable objects and all members of trusts will be under a statutory duty to conduct the trust in accordance with its objects. In the first instance it will be for the governing body to consider whether to form a partnership with a trust and to decide how that will enhance the school's ethos and character. The local authority can refer the governing body's decision to the schools adjudicator for determination if there are serious concerns.

We propose to disqualify certain individuals from being involved with trusts. These include persons disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification but also persons who have previously been removed as charity trustees or who have been disqualified from working with children and young people. We are considering what role the schools commissioner might play and whether further safeguards are needed to prevent the entry of inappropriate trusts.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria will be adopted to decide whether a school's application for additional flexibility under the proposals in the White Paper will raise standards; and what information will be required from a school making such an application. [23335]

Jacqui Smith: The current criteria are laid down in the Power to Innovate provisions and there are no plans to change them.

Information and guidance is published on the DfES website at:

http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit/Information/powerinnovate/?version=1

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how parents will be consulted when a governing body proposes that its school should become a trust school; which parents will be consulted; and whether consultations will include the parents of pupils at feeder primary schools. [23336]

Jacqui Smith: The details of how parents will be consulted will be subject to regulations and guidance. We will consult on these before bringing them into effect after the introduction of the Education Bill.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she intends that a trust running a school will be permitted to use income received or generated for charitable purposes unconnected with the school. [23683]

Jacqui Smith: We will require trusts to have specific charitable objects relating to the schools with which they are associated. Any income generated by a trust could only be used for those objects.

Trust schools' delegated budgets will be under the control of their governing bodies, and not their trusts. Similarly, income generated by a trust school from activities such as letting the school premises will also normally come under the control of the governing body, rather than the trust.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils attend each *(a)* primary school, *(b)* secondary school and *(c)* special needs school in the Hemel Hempstead constituency. [24021]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools1: Number of pupils2—as at January 2005—Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency

URN	LEA number	DfES number	Establishment name	School type	Number of pupils	
					Headcount	Full-time equivalent
117097	919	2023	Hobletts Manor Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	238	238.0
117100	919	2031	Flamstead School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	109	106.0
117101	919	2032	Gaddesden Row Junior Mixed and Infant School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	43	43.0
117106	919	2040	George Street Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	228	214.0
117107	919	2041	Boxmoor Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	238	223.0
117108	919	2044	Two Waters Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	230	217.0
117109	919	2045	Tudor Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	173	163.0
117110	919	2047	South Hill Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	221	221.0
117127	919	2074	Markyate Village School and Nursery	Infant and Junior School 5–11	185	166.5
117197	919	2184	Hobletts Manor Infants' School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	228	199.0
117198	919	2185	Chaulden Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	129	129.0
117202	919	2193	Chaulden Infants' and Nursery	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	115	98.5
117214	919	2210	Chambersbury Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	210	201.5
117215	919	2211	Broadfield Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	225	225.0
117216	919	2212	Broadfield Infants' School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	216	194.0
117231	919	2243	Micklem Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	207	196.5
117234	919	2251	The Reddings Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	152	144.0
117239	919	2256	Rossgate Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	293	280.5
117241	919	2259	Martindale Primary and Nursery School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	160	151.5
117249	919	2274	Gade Valley Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	233	220.5

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools1: Number of pupils2—as at January 2005—Hemel Hempstead parliamentary constituency

URN	LEA number	DfES number	Establishment name	School type	Number of pupils	
					Headcount	Full-time equivalent
117256	919	2293	Pixies Hill Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	207	207.0
117282	919	2337	The Hammond Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	222	211.5
117283	919	2338	Kings Langley Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	429	405.5
117333	919	2422	Lime Walk Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	217	205.5
117335	919	2426	Aycliffe Drive Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	322	303.0
117336	919	2427	Holtsmere End Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	200	200.0
117343	919	2438	Barncroft Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	137	130.0
117344	919	2439	Jupiter Drive Junior Mixed and Infant School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	139	139.0
117349	919	2448	Brockswood Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	152	152.0
117359	919	2458	Eastbrook Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	180	170.5
117365	919	2466	Belswains Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	230	204.0
117368	919	2469	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	485	455.0
117377	919	2995	Holtsmere End Infant and Nursery School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	243	203.5
117381	919	2999	Bellgate Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	233	216.0
117414	919	3049	Potten End Church of England First School	First School 5–9	153	141.0
117416	919	3054	Leverstock Green Church of England Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	280	263.5
117418	919	3302	Nash Mills Church of England Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	218	203.5
117433	919	3335	Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	86	80.5
117443	919	3352	Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	84	84.0
117468	919	3386	St. Cuthbert Mayne Roman Catholic Junior School	Junior School 7–11 or 8–11	240	240.0
117471	919	3391	Saint Albert the Great Catholic Primary School	Infant and Junior School 5–11	229	216.5
117484	919	3409	St. Rose's Catholic Infants School	Infant School 5–7 or 5–8	220	195.5
117500	919	4005	The Hemel Hempstead School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,135	1,135.0
117512	919	4029	Adeyfield School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	778	778.0
117523	919	4080	Longdean School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,223	1,223.0
117526	919	4096	Kings Langley School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	985	985.0
117528	919	4100	The Cavendish School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,144	1,144.0
117552	919	4499	The Astley Cooper School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	820	820.0
117557	919	4619	John F Kennedy Roman Catholic School	Comprehensive all-through 11–18	1,078	1,078.0
117668	919	7009	Boxmoor House School	Special (Maintained Day)	47	47.0
117672	919	7013	The Collett School	Special (Maintained Day)	124	124.0
117682	919	7025	Woodfield School	Special (Maintained Day)	65	64.5
131319	919	7047	Haywood Grove School	Special (Maintained Day)	26	26.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Schools White Paper

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills further to her oral statement of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 185, on the Schools White Paper, what steps schools will be required to take to ensure fair access to them for all pupils living in the relevant community. [23712]

Jacqui Smith: Schools' admission arrangements are determined locally. Admission authorities for schools are already required to ensure that their admission arrangements comply with Equal Opportunities legislation. They are also required to have regard to the School Admissions Code Of Practice when determining their admission policies, to ensure that admission criteria and information published for parents are sufficiently clear, fair and objective to give applicants a reasonable indication of their chances of securing a place. The code recommends that criteria should be, as far as possible, inclusive of all elements of the local community.

We recognise that no one approach to ensuring fair access for children will work in all circumstances, and admission arrangements should be determined in light of local needs and circumstances. However, the White Paper proposes making it easier to introduce pupil banding. This provides a means of ensuring that a school's intake is representative of the full ability range of either applicants for a particular school, of children in the area as a whole, or of the national ability profile—depending on the type of banding adopted.

All proposals for new schools must set out their proposed admission arrangements, and indicate how these will promote community and social integration and choice. Successful schools will also be allowed to expand if they can show their admission arrangements

are in line with the Admissions Code. In both instances the agreed admission arrangements will be set for three years, after which they will be subject to annual consultation locally.

We have also recently amended legislation to ensure that priority is given to looked after children, as one of the most vulnerable groups in the community.

Furthermore, we propose to extend entitlement to free transport for disadvantaged children, so that parental choice is not restricted by concerns about the cost and availability of transport.

Science

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* specialist science colleges and schools and *(b)* science academies have been established in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [22914]

Jacqui Smith: Science specialism was first introduced in 2002. The numbers of specialist Science Colleges becoming operational in each year are: 24 in 2002, 97 in 2003,104 in 2004 and 44 in 2005. The following numbers chose science as part of a combined specialism: five in 2003, 13 in 2004 and 14 in 2005. In 2004, 12 schools chose science as a second specialism at redesignation. Two of the 27 open Academies have a Science specialism; Stockley Academy, Hillingdon opened in 2004 and specialises in Science and Technology, Macmillan Academy opened in 2005 and specialises in science and PE.

The Government are committed to improving young people's attainment in science and the number of young people progressing to science study at higher levels.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to increase the number of qualified science teachers in state schools; and if she will make a statement. [22922]

Jacqui Smith: The number of people recruited to science teacher training in England from 1999 to 2005 is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Science teacher training

	Recruitment
1999/2000	2,362
2000/01	2,413
2001/02	2,594
2002/03	2,701
2003/04	2,871
2004/05	2,806

Since 2000 we have provided £6,000 bursaries to PGCE trainee science teachers and have also provided them with a £4,000 Golden Hello once they have successfully completed their induction. From September 2005 trainee science teachers have been provided with a £7,000 bursary and from September 2006 the bursary will increase again to £9,000. Science teachers who received the increased bursary will also be provided with an increased Golden Hello of £5,000, once they have successfully completed their induction.

The number of people recruited to teach science through the employment-based routes into teaching in England from 1999 to 2004 is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Science employment-based routes into teaching

	Recruitment
1999/2000	60
2000/01	170
2001/02	460
2002/03	520
2003/04	660

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is now funding nine enhancement courses to increase the number of people able to start initial teacher training. As a result of the pilot courses, this year 74 additional people who were previously unable to train as science teachers will begin initial teacher training with a specialism in either physics or chemistry. Enhancement courses will be made available nationally from January 2006.

In 2004, 2,711 science trainees successfully completed initial teacher training and gained qualified teacher status; this is 41.9 per cent. (801) more newly qualified science teachers than in 1999.

Over the last three years, in order to attract more science undergraduates into teaching we have been running the very successful Student Associate Scheme in partnership with the TDA. The scheme places high quality undergraduates in schools for up to 20 days to provide curriculum support for teachers and to carry out project work with pupils. From the academic year 2003/04 to 2004/05, the scheme has placed around 4,500 science undergraduates in schools and we expect that figure to rise by more than 3,000 in the current 2005/06 academic year.

The Government are committed to improving young people's attainment in science and the number progressing to science study at higher levels.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have gained GCSEs in dual science in each year since 1997, broken down by grade; and if she will make a statement. [22927]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table.

Table 1: Number of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving GCSE Double Award Science by grade

	*A**	*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*	*G*	*U*[2]	*X*[3]	*Thousand Total*[4]
1997	16.1	31.5	76.6	88.7	92.7	68.5	38.0	11.5	6.0	10.1	439.6
1998	15.3	33.8	55.2	110.3	92.1	64.7	36.1	13.8	8.9	0.8	431.0
1999	16.8	33.9	55.5	113.6	95.6	67.0	37.6	14.0	7.5	0.5	441.9

Table 1: Number of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving GCSE Double Award Science by grade

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[2]	X[3]	Thousand Total[4]
2000	17.5	35.3	54.7	117.7	96.5	65.5	35.8	13.7	7.7	0.7	445.0
2001	18.8	37.1	57.7	126.1	97.6	66.7	37.1	14.4	8.0	0.6	464.1
2002	19.0	37.2	59.1	127.1	97.7	66.8	36.2	14.1	8.5	0.7	466.5
2003	18.2	39.1	60.9	131.8	92.8	63.7	39.0	16.8	9.8	0.8	473.0
2004	20.4	40.2	63.5	135.7	91.4	64.1	37.3	16.5	9.8	0.7	479.6
2005[5]	21.2	40.6	63.1	127.9	86.5	54.8	31.2	13.3	8.2	0.7	447.4

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Grade U refers to pupils who are ungraded or unclassified.
[3] Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or results pending.
[4] As numbers are rounded, figures in each row will not sum exactly to row totals.
[5] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have gained *(a)* an A level, *(b)* an AS level and *(c)* a GCSE in (i) biology or human biology, (ii) chemistry and (iii) physics in each year since 1997, broken down by grade; and if she will make a statement. [22928]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following tables:

(a) A level examination results of 16 to 18-year–old [1] students by grade

Thousand

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Total[4]
Biological sciences								
1997	70.2	93.5	91.7	85.0	70.1	65.5	410.5	476.0
1998	79.3	95.7	94.6	86.7	70.8	61.8	427.1	489.0
1999	82.1	90.7	93.0	84.4	66.0	55.7	416.2	471.9
2000	81.9	91.6	91.9	81.7	64.4	50.4	411.5	461.9
2001	83.2	89.5	88.7	75.9	61.1	47.5	398.5	445.9
2002	96.6	88.8	89.9	81.8	61.7	35.3	418.7	454.1
2003	94.8	91.5	89.6	76.8	59.3	27.1	412.0	439.0
2004	99.6	94.8	91.9	76.9	55.8	23.4	419.0	442.4
2005[2]	105.2	99.8	94.5	79.3	57.0	23.1	435.7	458.8
Chemistry								
1997	77.8	77.3	66.9	53.9	43.4	45.0	319.3	364.3
1998	87.7	77.8	69.4	54.8	41.0	40.4	330.7	371.0
1999	88.8	77.4	67.6	53.4	37.6	33.6	324.8	358.3
2000	90.3	78.2	65.8	51.9	35.2	31.5	321.4	352.9
2001	89.8	74.3	63.0	47.7	35.2	28.7	310.1	338.7
2002	91.3	75.0	62.0	47.1	31.7	16.1	307.1	323.2
2003	90.6	75.2	58.9	44.2	29.5	12.3	298.3	310.7
2004	97.6	78.5	61.3	44.3	29.1	10.6	310.7	321.3
2005[2]	99.0	83.0	63.9	46.4	29.2	11.6	321.5	333.1
Physics								
1997	62.1	62.1	52.5	45.0	32.8	33.3	254.5	287.8
1998	68.0	61.5	55.4	46.1	33.7	32.1	264.6	296.7
1999	72.1	59.3	55.5	45.5	33.5	29.6	265.9	295.5
2000	71.0	56.1	51.7	42.7	31.9	28.4	253.5	281.9
2001	70.4	56.1	51.7	41.3	32.3	28.6	251.7	280.3
2002	74.9	56.9	51.6	44.9	32.6	17.7	260.9	278.6
2003	72.1	55.1	48.7	41.9	31.1	13.9	248.9	262.8
2004	71.0	51.2	47.1	37.8	27.2	11.8	234.3	246.1
2005[2]	69.2	51.5	44.8	37.5	27.2	11.7	230.1	241.8

(b) AS level examination results of 16 to 18-year-old [1] students by grade

Thousand

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Total[4]
Biological sciences								
2001	9.0	8.5	9.1	8.7	7.1	8.5	42.4	50.9
2002	9.3	8.3	8.9	8.7	7.8	10.1	42.9	53.0
2003	8.5	8.2	9.0	9.3	9.1	11.4	44.1	55.4
2004	8.4	8.7	9.3	9.6	9.0	11.2	45.0	56.2
2005[2]	8.2	8.8	9.8	9.6	9.2	11.3	45.7	56.9
Chemistry								
2001	7.7	6.7	6.3	5.3	3.9	4.8	30.0	34.8
2002	7.4	6.3	6.3	5.8	4.8	5.5	30.6	36.1
2003	7.4	6.5	6.5	6.2	5.2	6.0	31.9	37.9
2004	7.2	6.6	6.7	6.3	5.4	6.5	32.1	38.6
2005[2]	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.4	5.6	6.7	33.4	40.1
Physics								
2001	6.7	5.4	5.4	4.6	3.6	4.5	25.7	30.1
2002	6.6	5.3	5.3	4.7	4.0	5.4	25.9	31.2
2003	6.1	4.9	5.0	4.6	4.3	5.4	25.0	30.4

Thousand

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes[4]	Total[5]
2004	5.9	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.1	5.4	24.5	29.9
2005[2]	5.6	4.8	4.9	4.6	4.0	5.2	23.9	29.2

(c) GCSE examination results of 15-year–old [1] pupils by grade

Thousand

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[4]	X[5]	Total[6]
Biological sciences											
1997	4.4	9.8	11.3	6.7	2.4	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	36.6
1998	4.7	10.6	10.6	7.6	2.8	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	37.9
1999	5.7	10.4	11.0	7.5	2.8	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	38.8
2000	5.7	10.9	10.8	7.8	2.8	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.0	39.4
2001	6.7	10.8	11.0	7.9	2.8	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	40.5
2002	6.8	11.2	11.2	7.5	2.6	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	40.6
2003	7.2	11.8	11.7	8.3	3.0	0.9	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	43.6
2004	8.0	12.7	11.5	8.1	2.9	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	44.8
2005[2]	8.5	13.5	12.0	8.6	3.1	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.0	47.5
Chemistry											
1997	5.5	8.2	10.5	7.3	2.2	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	35.1
1998	5.4	10.2	10.1	7.1	2.4	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	36.6
1999	6.3	10.2	9.9	7.3	2.7	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	37.7
2000	6.4	10.3	9.8	7.4	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	37.7
2001	6.6	10.8	9.8	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	38.8
2002	6.9	10.8	9.7	7.7	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	39.1
2003	7.7	11.1	10.3	8.6	3.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	42.0
2004	8.8	11.6	10.4	8.2	3.0	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	43.1
2005[2]	9.6	11.8	11.0	8.8	3.0	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	45.1
Physics											
1997	5.3	8.4	10.4	6.6	2.2	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	34.5
1998	6.3	9.3	9.4	7.2	2.7	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	36.2
1999	7.4	9.5	9.2	7.2	2.7	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	37.2
2000	6.9	10.1	9.5	7.1	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	37.5
2001	7.1	10.5	9.4	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	38.4
2002	7.6	10.5	9.1	7.6	2.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	38.7
2003	7.9	11.1	9.8	8.1	3.1	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	41.1
2004	8.7	11.8	10.1	8.1	2.8	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	42.5
2005[2]	9.4	12.2	11.0	8.2	2.9	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	44.7

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.
[3] Includes ungraded, no award (absent/ declined) and pending.
[4] Grade U refers to pupils who are ungraded or unclassified.
[5] Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or results pending.
[6] As numbers are rounded, figures in each row will not sum exactly to row totals.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those students who gained GCSEs in dual science in each year since 1997 were educated in *(a)* the state sector and *(b)* the independent sector, broken down by grade; and if she will make a statement. [22929]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following tables:

Table 1: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE Double Award Science educated in independent sector

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[2]	X[3]	Total
1997	15.8	12.0	8.3	3.3	1.3	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	4.0
1998	16.6	12.2	8.2	3.8	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.0	4.0
1999	17.0	11.4	8.1	3.6	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.0	3.8
2000	17.1	11.4	8.1	3.7	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.8	3.9
2001	16.9	11.7	8.3	3.6	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.9	4.0
2002	17.2	12.1	8.4	3.8	1.5	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.4	1.5	4.2
2003	17.9	11.5	8.2	3.7	1.6	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.4	4.1
2004	20.6	13.2	8.7	4.1	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.9	4.7
2005[4]	21.3	14.2	9.0	4.1	1.4	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.4	1.3	5.1

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE Double Award Science educated in maintained sector

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[2]	X[3]	Total
1997	84.2	88.0	91.7	96.7	98.7	99.4	99.7	99.8	99.6	99.7	96.0
1998	83.4	87.8	91.8	96.2	98.6	99.5	99.8	99.9	99.7	99.0	96.0
1999	83.0	88.6	91.9	96.4	98.7	99.6	99.8	99.9	99.7	99.0	96.2
2000	82.9	88.6	91.9	96.3	98.6	99.6	99.8	99.9	99.7	99.2	96.1

Table 2: Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE Double Award Science educated in maintained sector

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[2]	X[3]	Total
2001	83.1	88.3	91.7	96.4	98.6	99.5	99.8	99.8	99.7	99.1	96.0
2002	82.8	87.9	91.6	96.2	98.5	99.5	99.8	99.9	99.6	98.5	95.8
2003	82.1	88.5	91.8	96.3	98.4	99.5	99.8	99.9	99.7	98.6	95.9
2004	79.4	86.8	91.3	95.9	98.5	99.4	99.7	99.7	99.7	99.1	95.3
2005[4]	78.7	85.8	91.0	95.9	98.6	99.4	99.8	99.8	99.6	98.7	94.9

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Grade U refers to pupils who are ungraded or unclassified.
[3] Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or results pending.
[4] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those students who gained *(a)* a GCSE, *(b)* an A level and *(c)* an AS level in (i) biology or human biology, (ii) chemistry and (iii) physics in each year since 1997 were educated in (A) the state sector and (B) the independent sector, broken down by by grade; and if she will make a statement. [22930]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following tables:

(a) A level science results: Percentage of 16–18 year-old[1] students achieving each grade in science A levels educated in independent sector

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Percentage Total
Biological Sciences								
1997	38.5	25.3	17.1	12.5	9.9	7.5	20.4	18.7
1998	37.9	24.9	17.6	12.5	9.8	6.8	20.7	18.9
1999	37.8	24.6	17.3	12.6	9.0	6.7	20.7	19.0
2000	36.4	23.2	16.9	13.1	10.5	6.7	20.4	18.9
2001	36.2	24.1	17.2	12.5	9.8	7.2	20.7	19.3
2002	36.5	23.8	16.5	11.1	8.1	5.6	20.4	19.2
2003	36.2	23.4	15.8	11.3	8.3	5.2	20.3	19.3
2004	36.5	24.3	15.9	11.6	8.3	6.0	20.9	20.1
2005[2]	35.3	22.1	14.9	9.7	6.8	4.6	19.5	18.7
Chemistry								
1997	42.2	28.9	19.5	16.5	13.1	9.4	25.9	23.9
1998	41.8	28.0	20.1	15.6	12.5	9.6	26.0	24.2
1999	40.8	27.2	20.8	16.3	12.6	10.6	26.1	24.7
2000	39.5	26.8	20.0	15.8	12.6	9.2	25.6	24.1
2001	39.2	27.1	20.0	15.7	12.4	11.9	25.7	24.6
2002	39.8	27.0	19.3	13.6	9.9	6.9	25.4	24.5
2003	40.8	26.4	19.1	13.9	9.3	7.3	25.8	25.1
2004	40.5	26.5	19.0	13.4	10.4	8.4	26.1	25.5
2005[2]	38.8	24.7	18.0	13.0	9.9	8.2	24.7	24.1
Physics								
1997	38.4	26.4	19.6	15.2	11.6	10.0	24.0	22.4
1998	38.8	25.7	19.2	14.8	12.2	8.6	24.1	22.4
1999	37.6	25.6	20.1	14.6	11.7	11.2	24.1	22.8
2000	37.0	26.3	20.2	15.3	12.3	9.7	24.4	22.9
2001	37.4	26.5	20.1	15.3	12.3	9.4	24.6	23.0
2002	36.3	25.1	17.9	14.4	9.8	8.3	23.2	22.2
2003	38.4	25.6	19.0	13.5	11.5	8.2	24.2	23.4
2004	38.8	26.2	20.1	15.2	11.5	9.1	25.3	24.5
2005[2]	37.2	25.6	17.6	13.2	8.7	7.8	23.5	22.7

Percentage of 16–18 year-old[1] students achieving each grade in science A levels educated in maintained sector

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Percentage Total
Biological sciences								
1997	61.5	74.6	82.9	87.5	90.1	92.5	79.5	81.3
1998	62.1	75.1	82.4	87.5	90.2	93.2	79.3	81.1
1999	62.2	75.4	82.7	87.4	91.0	93.3	79.3	81.0
2000	63.6	76.8	83.1	86.9	89.5	93.3	79.6	81.1
2001	63.8	75.9	82.8	87.5	90.2	92.8	79.3	80.7
2002	63.5	76.2	83.5	88.9	91.9	94.4	79.6	80.8
2003	63.8	76.6	84.2	88.7	91.7	94.8	79.7	80.7
2004	63.5	75.7	84.1	88.4	91.7	94.0	79.1	79.9
2005[2]	64.7	77.9	85.1	90.3	93.2	95.4	80.5	81.3
Chemistry								
1997	57.7	71.0	80.5	83.4	86.8	90.5	74.0	76.0
1998	58.2	72.0	79.9	84.4	87.5	90.4	74.0	75.8
1999	59.2	72.8	79.2	83.7	87.4	89.4	73.9	75.3
2000	60.5	73.2	80.0	84.2	87.4	90.8	74.4	75.9
2001	60.8	72.9	80.0	84.3	87.6	88.1	74.3	75.4
2002	60.2	73.0	80.7	86.4	90.1	93.1	74.6	75.5
2003	59.2	73.6	80.9	86.1	90.7	92.7	74.2	74.9
2004	59.5	73.5	81.0	86.6	89.6	91.6	73.9	74.5
2005[2]	61.2	75.3	82.0	87.0	90.1	91.8	75.3	75.9

Percentage of 16–18 year-old[1] students achieving each grade in science A levels educated in maintained sector

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Percentage Total
Physics								
1997	61.3	73.3	80.0	84.6	88.2	90.0	75.7	77.3
1998	61.2	74.3	80.8	85.2	87.8	91.4	75.9	77.6
1999	62.4	74.4	79.9	85.4	88.3	88.8	75.9	77.2
2000	63.0	73.7	79.8	84.7	87.7	90.3	75.6	77.1
2001	62.6	73.5	79.9	84.7	87.7	90.6	75.4	77.0
2002	63.7	74.9	82.1	85.6	90.2	91.7	76.8	77.8
2003	61.6	74.4	81.0	86.5	88.5	91.8	75.8	76.6
2004	61.2	73.8	79.9	84.8	88.5	90.9	74.7	75.5
2005[2]	62.8	74.4	82.4	86.8	91.3	92.2	76.5	77.3

(b) AS level examination results: Percentage of 16–18 year-old[1] students achieving each grade in science AS levels educated in independent sector

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E passes	Percentage Total
Biological sciences								
2001	26.2	16.7	11.7	7.7	6.2	3.6	14.0	12.3
2002	27.2	17.2	13.0	9.1	6.3	2.9	14.9	12.6
2003	27.7	18.2	12.6	9.5	6.9	3.2	14.7	12.3
2004	26.8	18.3	12.3	8.6	6.6	3.3	14.2	12.1
2005[2]	26.6	16.5	11.0	8.2	6.1	3.2	13.3	11.3
Chemistry								
2001	30.4	19.2	13.8	8.7	7.0	3.9	17.5	15.6
2002	33.3	22.1	16.5	11.5	8.3	4.9	19.5	17.3
2003	32.8	20.9	15.9	12.2	8.8	4.5	19.0	16.6
2004	31.8	19.8	15.1	11.6	8.0	4.3	17.9	15.6
2005[2]	29.4	19.8	13.5	10.6	7.6	4.1	16.7	14.6
Physics								
2001	28.6	18.7	13.6	11.2	7.6	6.0	17.3	15.7
2002	33.0	21.4	17.5	12.8	9.5	5.4	[illegible]	17.6
2003	31.6	21.8	18.1	12.6	10.0	5.3	[illegible]	17.1
2004	30.9	21.1	15.8	12.3	9.1	4.7	18.7	16.2
2005[2]	31.2	21.0	15.6	12.1	9.4	5.0	18.6	16.2

Percentage of 16–18 year-old[1] students achieving each grade in science AS levels educated in maintained sector

	A	B	C	D	E	Other[3]	A-E Passes	Percentage Total
Biological sciences								
2001	73.8	83.3	88.3	92.3	93.8	96.4	86.0	87.7
2002	72.8	82.8	87.0	90.9	93.7	97.1	85.1	87.4
2003	72.3	81.8	87.4	90.5	93.1	96.8	85.3	87.7
2004	73.2	81.7	87.7	91.4	93.4	96.7	85.8	87.9
2005[2]	73.4	83.5	89.0	91.8	93.9	96.8	86.7	88.7
Chemistry								
2001	69.6	80.8	86.2	91.3	93.0	96.1	82.5	84.4
2002	66.7	77.9	83.5	88.5	91.7	95.1	80.5	82.7
2003	67.2	79.1	84.1	87.8	91.2	95.5	81.0	83.4
2004	68.2	80.2	84.9	88.4	92.0	95.7	82.1	84.4
2005[2]	70.6	80.2	86.5	89.4	92.4	95.9	83.3	85.4
Physics								
2001	71.4	81.3	86.4	88.8	92.4	94.0	82.7	84.3
2002	67.0	78.6	82.5	87.2	90.5	94.6	79.8	82.4
2003	68.4	78.2	81.9	87.4	90.0	94.7	80.3	82.9
2004	69.1	78.9	84.2	87.7	90.9	95.3	81.3	83.8
2005[2]	68.8	79.0	84.4	87.9	90.6	95.0	81.4	83.8

(c) GCSE examination results: Percentage of 15 year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE science educated in independent sector

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[4]	X[5]	Percentage Total
Biological sciences											
1997	65.8	55.3	45.2	38.5	36.5	33.4	28.0	13.7	32.4	31.5	47.8
1998	63.9	52.1	42.2	35.8	33.2	24.5	22.9	20.8	21.9	55.2	45.0
1999	61.3	49.8	39.8	33.1	29.2	24.6	19.7	13.6	20.8	26.5	42.9
2000	60.5	48.4	37.3	29.6	28.8	26.2	19.1	8.0	8.6	22.2	41.0
2001	59.8	47.0	36.2	29.1	27.4	26.1	18.9	11.7	18.4	18.6	40.5
2002	59.3	44.8	33.9	28.2	25.3	22.6	11.6	1.9	16.8	24.6	39.1
2003	56.5	42.5	32.6	25.4	21.6	18.3	10.1	1.3	9.1	21.4	36.4
2004	55.8	39.2	26.4	22.4	18.1	16.6	9.0	4.4	12.3	20.0	33.6
2005[2]	51.3	36.9	24.2	20.7	18.3	14.9	5.6	3.5	9.1	13.2	31.1
Chemistry											
1997	68.1	56.6	44.7	35.6	25.5	19.1	13.1	3.2	22.5	23.5	46.8
1998	67.3	53.0	39.8	31.9	21.2	12.5	10.6	8.1	19.3	46.7	43.9
1999	63.8	51.0	39.4	28.9	19.9	14.1	7.9	3.1	14.1	41.7	42.3
2000	62.7	49.7	36.7	26.4	18.4	12.6	8.8	4.1	20.4	27.3	40.6

(c) GCSE examination results: Percentage of 15 year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE science educated in independent sector

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[4]	X[5]	Percentage Total
2001	63.3	48.4	35.8	25.2	19.9	12.0	12.2	4.8	14.0	27.0	40.1
2002	62.7	47.3	34.0	23.9	17.3	10.4	10.4	5.5	13.3	33.3	39.0
2003	56.9	45.9	32.0	21.5	15.7	9.9	7.7	4.1	14.4	31.0	36.3
2004	55.5	40.5	26.0	19.9	14.0	12.4	7.9	6.7	6.5	58.3	33.5
2005[2]	51.5	37.8	23.7	17.8	11.9	12.1	6.2	2.1	10.6	21.7	31.0
Physics											
1997	64.7	54.2	44.4	36.7	27.5	24.3	17.7	9.8	22.6	26.8	46.3
1998	62.1	51.6	41.4	33.2	22.8	14.1	12.6	11.9	19.3	40.0	43.7
1999	59.3	48.3	40.4	29.3	22.4	16.3	11.5	11.8	20.5	25.0	41.9
2000	58.7	47.1	36.9	28.0	23.2	15.1	8.0	7.8	19.1	45.0	40.3
2001	59.9	46.6	36.7	26.3	21.7	16.7	9.4	9.6	16.1	45.5	39.9
2002	58.2	45.1	35.3	24.1	19.5	14.0	7.4	9.0	15.8	40.4	38.5
2003	56.0	42.6	32.5	22.7	17.7	13.2	7.3	14.0	15.8	54.3	36.2
2004	55.7	38.0	26.4	20.0	15.0	11.4	9.4	7.0	13.8	38.9	33.3
2005[2]	51.0	35.9	23.8	18.5	13.8	12.0	6.2	4.5	8.7	15.0	30.9

Percentage of 15 year-old pupils[1] achieving each grade in GCSE science educated in maintained sector

Percentage	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U[4]	X[5]	Total
Biological sciences											
1997	34.2	44.7	54.8	61.5	63.5	66.6	72.0	86.3	67.6	68.5	52.2
1998	36.1	47.9	57.8	64.2	66.8	75.5	77.1	79.2	78.1	44.8	55.0
1999	38.7	50.2	60.2	66.9	70.8	75.4	80.3	86.4	79.2	73.5	57.1
2000	39.5	51.6	62.7	70.4	71.2	73.8	80.9	92.0	91.4	77.8	59.0
2001	40.2	53.0	63.8	70.9	72.6	73.9	81.1	88.3	81.6	81.4	59.5
2002	40.7	55.2	66.1	71.8	74.7	77.4	88.4	98.1	83.2	75.4	60.9
2003	43.5	57.5	67.4	74.6	78.4	81.7	89.9	98.7	90.9	78.6	63.6
2004	44.2	60.8	73.6	77.6	81.9	83.4	91.0	95.6	87.7	80.0	66.4
2005[2]	48.7	63.1	75.8	79.3	81.7	85.1	94.4	96.5	90.9	86.8	68.9
Chemistry											
1997	31.9	43.4	55.3	64.4	74.5	80.9	86.9	96.8	77.5	76.5	53.2
1998	32.7	47.0	60.2	68.1	78.8	87.5	89.4	91.9	80.7	53.3	56.1
1999	36.2	49.0	60.6	71.1	80.1	85.9	92.1	96.9	85.9	58.3	57.7
2000	37.3	50.3	63.3	73.6	81.6	87.4	91.2	95.9	79.6	72.7	59.4
2001	36.7	51.6	64.2	74.8	80.1	88.0	87.8	95.2	86.0	73.0	59.9
2002	37.3	52.7	66.0	76.1	82.7	89.6	89.6	94.5	86.7	66.7	61.0
2003	43.1	54.1	68.0	78.5	84.3	90.1	92.3	95.9	85.6	69.0	63.7
2004	44.5	59.5	74.0	80.1	86.0	87.6	92.1	93.3	93.5	41.7	66.5
2005[2]	48.5	62.2	76.3	82.2	88.1	87.9	93.8	97.9	89.4	78.3	69.0
Physics											
1997	35.3	45.8	55.6	63.3	72.5	75.7	82.3	90.2	77.4	73.2	53.7
1998	37.9	48.4	58.6	66.8	77.2	85.9	87.4	88.1	80.7	60.0	56.3
1999	40.7	51.7	59.6	70.7	77.6	83.7	88.5	88.2	79.5	75.0	58.1
2000	41.3	52.9	63.1	72.0	76.8	84.9	92.0	92.2	80.9	55.0	59.7
2001	40.1	53.4	63.3	73.7	78.3	83.3	90.6	90.4	83.9	54.5	60.1
2002	41.8	54.9	64.7	75.9	80.5	86.0	92.6	91.0	84.2	59.6	61.5
2003	44.0	57.4	67.5	77.3	82.3	86.8	92.7	86.0	84.2	45.7	63.8
2004	44.3	62.0	73.6	80.0	85.0	88.6	90.6	93.0	86.2	61.1	66.7
2005[2]	49.0	64.1	76.2	81.5	86.2	88.0	93.8	95.5	91.3	85.0	69.1

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.
[3] Includes ungraded, no award (absent/declined) and pending.
[4] Grade U refers to pupils who are ungraded or unclassified.
[5] Grade X refers to pupils who were absent or results pending.

Science Curriculum

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether Twenty-First Century Science and Science for the Citizen will maintain the breadth and depth of the existing curriculum; and what the syllabus is for the two qualifications. [22398]

Jacqui Smith: The new Science GCSEs, which incorporate the statutory programme of study for Key Stage 4, will maintain the breadth, depth and challenge of the current Science GCSEs.

Selective Grammar Schools

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to amend the legislation governing *(a)* the admissions arrangements and *(b)* the curriculum of the remaining selective grammar schools in England; and if she will make a statement. [22668]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, it is for local parents to decide whether their local grammar schools should continue to select on the basis of academic ability. Selective schools are required to teach the full National Curriculum; like other maintained schools. We have no plans to legislate to change this.

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many people were employed by the

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its predecessor bodies in each year since 1996 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by directorate; [23368]

(2) what remuneration was received by *(a)* the chairman, *(b)* the chief executive and *(c)* the directors of the component directorates of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its predecessor bodies in each year since 1996; [23421]

(3) how trustees of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust are appointed; and what *(a)* remuneration and *(b)* expenses are received by members of the Trustee Council of the Specialist Schools Trust; [23423]

(4) what representations her Department has received on the Trust Council of the Specialist Schools Trust; [23528]

(5) what the annual turnover was of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its predecessor bodies in each year since 1996; [23529]

(6) what the grant in aid was to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its predecessor bodies in each year since 1996; [23530]

(7) what costs were incurred in the renaming of the Specialist Schools Trust as the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. [23531]

Jacqui Smith: The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), and its predecessor bodies, is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Although the Department for Education and Skills grant funds the trust to carry out work on its behalf, SSAT also receives income from other sources.

Grant in aid to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and its predecessor bodies for each of the full financial years requested is as follows:

	£000
1996–97	711
1997–98	677
1998–99	786
1999–2000	1,104
2000–01	1,487
2001–02	2,395
2002–03	4,454
2003–04	10,976
2004–05	18,444

The Department has no official representation on the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Council. In respect of the renaming of the trust, the cost of the transition is a matter for SSAT. My officials are discussing with SSAT what grant the Department might give to SSAT to support the transition and ongoing academies work.

The other questions asked are matters for the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. As a charitable trust and limited company SSAT publishes accounts which will have answers to some of the questions.

Summer Schools

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which organisations have expressed an interest in sponsoring the non-residential summer schools for gifted and talented pupils. [23946]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* This proposal in the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" is in an early stage of development. We have not yet invited expressions of interest in sponsoring non-residential summer schools for gifted and talented pupils. We shall announce further details in due course.

Truancy

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will increase the budget available to combat truancy from secondary schools. [22963]

Jacqui Smith: Schools and local authorities have considerable resources available to them: since 1997/98, funding per pupil has increased in real terms by 36 per cent. The Department's strategy to improve school attendance is proving successful: absences from school have fallen for four consecutive years to record low levels. There are 50,000 more pupils in school each day than would be the case if absence rates were still at 2000/01 levels. Tackling truancy, particularly persistent truancy, requires carefully focused work by schools working in partnership with their local authorities and other agencies, as set out in "Every Child Matters" and "Youth Matters".

In 2005/06, 450 secondary schools are receiving additional funding for measures to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance through the Behaviour Improvement Programme. In addition, we continue to support work in all parts of the country to improve attendance through funding for behaviour and attendance consultants in every local authority and the provision of expert advisers within the national strategies.

Trust Schools

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to ensure that the poorest pupils are not disadvantaged by the proposals for trust schools. [22717]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools Commissioner will encourage potential Trusts to focus their interest on weaker schools and schools in disadvantaged areas which are in greatest need of support. Trust schools, like all maintained schools, are required to comply with the law on admissions and to have regard both to the School Admissions Code of Practice and to their Admission Forum's advice. They must participate in co-ordinated admission arrangements and may be subject to investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman if parents complain of either maladministration or of unfair treatment.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria independent groups will need to meet to open the proposed trust schools. [22718]

Jacqui Smith: The promoters of new trust schools will need to consult on their plans and publish statutory proposals. Those proposals will set out the

characteristics of the school, including the proposed admission arrangements, and details of the trust itself. In future local authorities will decide proposals for new schools, including trust schools, having regard to guidance from the Secretary of State. In deciding proposals for a new school the local authority would take into account a range of factors including, for example, parental demand and the contribution that the school would make to raising standards, increasing diversity and improving community cohesion.

Where the governing body of an existing school proposes to acquire a trust, it will consult and publish statutory proposals, setting out details of the proposed trust and the rationale for acquiring it. It will normally be for individual governing bodies to decide such proposals, but where the governing body has failed to take proper account of the views of a majority of parents or there are serious concerns about the impact of the acquisition of the trust on school standards, the local authority may refer the proposals to the schools adjudicator whose decision on them will be final.

Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hours per year her Department recommends is spent teaching pupils for a *(a)* GCSE course and *(b)* General National Vocational Qualification course. [23456]

Jacqui Smith: The Department make no recommendations on how many hours per year be spent teaching pupils for either a GCSE or General National Vocational Qualification course.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Perverting the Course of Justice

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals have been charged with attempting to pervert the course of justice in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [22758]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the number of recorded crime offences relating to perverting the course of justice that were cleared via a sanction detection in 1999–2000 to 2004–05.

It should be noted that crime clearance figures are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders.

Offences relating to perverting the course of justice cleared by means of a sanction detection 1999–2000 to- 2004–05[1]

	Charge or summons	Caution[2]	Taken into consideration	Sanction detections
1999–2000	10	0	0	10
2000–01	12	1	0	13
2001–02	10	0	0	10
2002–03	11	0	0	11
2003–04	13	1	0	14
2004–05	8	0	0	8

[1] Offences relating to perverting the course of justice are: perverting the course of justice; attempting to pervert the course of justice; conspiracy to pervert the course of justice; and doing an act with intent to pervert the course of justice.

[2] Prior to September 2003, includes juvenile advice and warning. Since September 2003, includes juvenile informed warning and restorative caution.

Source:
PSNI Recorded Crime Statistics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals have been prosecuted in Northern Ireland with attempting to pervert the course of justice in each of the last five years. [22759]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the number of persons prosecuted and convicted in each of the calendar years 1999 to 2003, for offences relating to perverting the course of justice. Data for 2004 are not yet available.

Conviction statistics are offender based. Where a person is being dealt with for more than one offence at the same court sitting, only the most serious offence (that attracting the most severe court penalty) is included in the statistics.

Number of persons prosecuted and convicted for offences relating to perverting the cause of justice: 1999 to 2003

	Prosecuted	Convicted
1999	6	2
2000	19	15
2001	2	1
2002	12	7
2003	4	3

Note:
1. Offences relating to perverting the course of justice are: perverting the course of justice; attempting to pervert the course of justice; conspiracy to pervert the course of justice; and doing an act with intent to pervert the course of justice.

Source:
NIO

"On the Run"

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many alleged Republican offenders are known to be on the run from UK security forces. [21558]

Mr. Hain: I have asked the Police Service of Northern Ireland to conduct a review of outstanding warrants, and I will write to the hon. Gentleman when this review is complete.

Accident and Emergency Staff

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of staff at accident and emergency departments of hospitals in Northern Ireland have suffered injuries as a result of attacks upon them by members of the public as they carried out their duties in each of the last five years. [23232]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1229W. The level of detail now requested is not recorded centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

A-Levels

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of students attending *(a)* grammar schools and *(b)* secondary level schools in Northern Ireland obtained pass marks at A level in the latest period for which figures are available. [22853]

Angela E. Smith: The information for the 2003-04 academic year is as follows:

	Type of school		
	Grammar	*Non-grammar*	*All secondary level schools*
Percentage of pupils in Year 14[1] achieving 1 or more A levels[2] at grades A-E	98	59	86
Percentage of pupils entered for at least one A level achieving 1 or more A levels[2] at grades A-E	100	96	99

[1] Irrespective of whether they were entered for any GCE A level examinations.
[2] GCE A level only, not equivalent qualifications such as AVCEs.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in each constituency in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [22629]

Mr. Hanson: Five interim antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) on application have been granted in Northern Ireland to date; one in the Belfast city council area, two in the Larne borough council area, and two in the Coleraine borough council area. Data are not collected by parliamentary constituency.

Information on ASBOs by conviction is not collected centrally and would only be available at disproportionate cost. It is intended that this information will be captured by the Northern Ireland Court Service through their Integrated Court Operation System (ICOS) which is due to be rolled out from early next year.

ASBOs are a useful tool for tackling antisocial behaviour and are available to the PSNI, District Councils and Northern Ireland Housing Executive as part of a structured approach to tackling antisocial behaviour which may also include the use of mediation, warnings and acceptable behaviour contracts.

Aphis Database

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many male calves, with dairy sires born in Northern Ireland in the past 12 months, were registered on the APHIS database. [23384]

Angela E. Smith: APHIS does not routinely hold sire breed data and I am therefore unable to answer the question in the format requested. However, I can tell the hon. Member that 64,953 male calves were registered as dairy breeds on APHIS during the 12 months ending 30 September 2005. This figure includes bull calves. The breeds included are Ayrshire, Holstein, Jersey, Friesian, Guernsey and Dairy Shorthorn.

Avian Influenza

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the occasions on which the contingency arrangements for avian influenza have been exercised in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [23566]

Jacqui Smith: DARD has an avian influenza (AI) contingency plan which is available for use in the event of an outbreak. This contingency plan takes account of experiences of dealing with the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. DARD is committed to delivering an ongoing cycle of simulation and desktop exercises as part of epizootic disease preparedness. In June 2004, the Department tested the efficacy of its generic epizootic disease contingency plan for epizootic disease (CPED), on which the AI plan is based. In addition, over the past months DARD has tested several aspects of its avian influenza plan. In December 2004, an operational partners seminar was held to discuss the AI plan with partner organisations and stakeholder representative bodies. In June 2005, an exercise was carried out over two days to test the adequacy of Health and Safety guidance and the health services procedures to be used in the event of an outbreak. A desktop exercise was also carried out in conjunction to test the emergency procurement arrangements set out in call-off contracts. Tests were also carried out on 15 March 2005 and on 20 September 2005 on humane slaughter techniques. This involved a broiler flock and caged layer flock respectively. In October 2005, an exercise was carried out to test communication arrangements and how the command structures operate. The plan is subject to an ongoing process of review and updating.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what mechanisms are in place in Northern Ireland to prevent an outbreak of avian influenza. [23594]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development keeps the threat posed by the spread of avian influenza (AI) under constant review and initiates protective measures deemed necessary to prevent its introduction as appropriate.

In line with European Union-wide measures, actions taken to date have included banning the importation of live birds and products from avian influenza affected areas. Other Decisions of the European Union (EU) Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health aimed at taking further preventative measures to limit the potential spread of the disease will be acted upon as required.

The Department has recently re-issued advice to the poultry industry regarding biosecurity measures to be observed to limit the risk of disease entering Northern Ireland and stopping its spread should it be introduced. The Department also provides information and guidance through its website to stakeholders and is engaged in a series of discussions with key industry representative bodies on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is a regular exchange on the developing situation.

For the third successive year, an AI survey is being carried out this autumn on certain types of poultry. Wild bird surveillance is also being undertaken, with the support of the Environment and Heritage Service and other non-government organisations.

There is close co-operation between relevant Departments to ensure a joined-up approach to the threat of AI including in respect of the implications for public health. Officials are also working closely with their counterparts from the Department of Agriculture and Food in the Republic of Ireland in relation to AI, which is of mutual interest in the context of the island of Ireland.

The Department has a contingency plan in place, which has been approved by the EU, to ensure that any outbreak of AI is dealt with quickly and effectively. This plan is continually being reviewed and updated, and has been tested on two occasions in recent weeks.

Bombs (South Belfast)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the two bombs that were recently made safe in South Belfast. [22942]

Mr. Woodward: On 16 October 2005 the Samaritans and BBC Northern Ireland were contacted and given a bomb warning. A coded message warned of a mortar type device intended for a prestigious target having been abandoned at the junction of Malone Road and Newforge Lane, Belfast in South Belfast. This was immediately passed to police.

A planned search resulted in the find of one suspicious object that was declared a viable Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and which was made safe by army technical officers.

During a daylight follow up operation search conducted on 17 October 2005, police found a second device in undergrowth approximately one metre from the site of the first device. This was subsequently declared a viable device of similar construction to the first and as such was made safe. Both devices await forensic examination.

On 19 October 2005 the Irish News was contacted with a further statement regarding the devices at Newforge Lane, Belfast. The caller claimed responsibility on behalf of Continuity IRA and stated that the alleged target of the attack had been a senior police officer.

PSNI Serious Crime Branch is conducting an investigation into the devices. Inquiries to date have not identified a specific target against whom these devices were intended to be used.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the target waiting time is in Northern Ireland for patients' first appointment with a specialist after an urgent referral by their general practitioner for suspected breast cancer. [22796]

Mr. Woodward: In Northern Ireland, patients with suspected breast cancer are expected to be assessed by a specialist within two weeks of urgent referral by their GP. This two-week target for breast cancer patients was introduced in August 2000.

Conviction Rates

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1219–20W, how many of the arrests in each district command unit area resulted in a conviction. [22884]

Mr. Hain: The Chief Constable has advised me that the Police Service of Northern Ireland do not collect information on the number of arrests from CCTV cameras which result in a conviction. North Belfast District Command Unit, for internal management reasons, has collected data for North Belfast. This information was given in the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1219–20W.

Departmental Refurbishment

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what action is being taken to ensure that refurbishment projects in his Department will procure timber from legal and sustainable sources; and whether guidance will be issued to contractors on each project concerning such procurement; [18382]

(2) whether his Department's procurement policy includes reference to sustainable grown timber used in the construction of departmental building projects; and if he will make a statement; [18383]

(3) what plans his Department has to fund the maintenance of the central point of expertise on timber. [18385]

Mr. Hain: For departmental refurbishment and building contracts in the NIO a standard timber procurement clause is applied which requires that:

> timber (including timber for wood based products) be obtained from well managed forests and/or plantations in accordance with:
>
> the laws governing forest management in the producer country or countries and
>
> international agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES).

Documentary evidence (which has been or can be independently verified) regarding the provenance of all timber supplied and evidence that suppliers have adopted and are implementing a formal environmental purchasing policy for timber and wood based products must also be provided.

The Department has no plans to fund the central point of expertise on timber.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Departmental Staff (Annual Leave)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average annual leave entitlement of staff in his Department was in each of the last three years. [22995]

Mr. Woodward: The leave entitlement for staff in the Northern Ireland Office is set out in the Northern Ireland civil service and Home civil service staff handbooks. Leave entitlement is directly related to grade and length of service. The following table sets out the annual leave entitlement of staff. This has remained unchanged over the last three years.

Grades	*Length of service*	*Annual leave entitlement (days)*
Senior civil servants	On entry	30
B1-A	On entry	25
	After 10 years	30
B2	On entry	22
	After one year	25
	After 15 years	30
D2-C	On entry	22
	After one year	25
	After 20 years	30

Discharged Patients (Deaths)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people died within seven days of their discharge from general acute in-patient or day care in each Northern Ireland health board area since 1995. [22791]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available.

Dyslexia and Dyspraxia

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school children there are with dyslexia or dyspraxia in each (i) constituency and (ii) council district in Northern Ireland. [23364]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Pupils suffering from dyslexia in schools in Northern Ireland 2004–05 by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Pupils with dyslexia*	
	Primary	*Post primary*
Belfast East	67	198
Belfast North	72	72
Belfast South	102	197
Belfast West	115	53
East Antrim	46	43
East Londonderry	71	30
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	113	167
Foyle	203	431
Lagan Valley	65	55
Mid Ulster	74	82
Newry and Armagh	55	59
North Antrim	37	26
North Down	93	76
South Antrim	88	77
South Down	145	161
Strangford	78	89
Upper Bann	115	71
West Tyrone	132	137
Northern Ireland total	1,671	2,024

Pupils suffering from dyspraxia in schools in Northern Ireland 2004–05 by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Pupils with dyspraxia*	
	Primary	*Post primary*
Belfast East	9	28
Belfast North	9	10
Belfast South	19	12
Belfast West	9	3
East Antrim	12	4
East Londonderry	4	3
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	10	12
Foyle	16	18
Lagan Valley	5	1
Mid Ulster	16	11
Newry and Armagh	7	7
North Antrim	6	3
North Down	5	7
South Antrim	12	6
South Down	18	10
Strangford	7	8
Upper Bann	14	7
West Tyrone	6	7
Northern Ireland total	184	157

Notes:

1. Primary figures relate to pupils in year 1 to year 7 only.
2. Figures relate to the area in which schools attended by pupils are located.

Pupils suffering from dyslexia in schools in Northern Ireland 2004–05 by district council

District council area	*Pupils with dyslexia*	
	Primary	*Post primary*
Antrim	16	5
Ards	49	87
Armagh	34	13
Ballymena	18	15
Ballymoney	13	1
Banbridge	65	36
Belfast	282	333
Carrickfergus	14	6
Castlereagh	93	190
Coleraine	13	6
Cookstown	37	38
Craigavon	60	44
Derry	203	431
Down	118	137
Dungannon	36	85
Fermanagh	87	85
Larne	24	25
Limavady	58	24
Lisburn	64	51
Magherafelt	27	41
Moyle	6	10
Newry and Mourne	52	67
Newtownabbey	81	84
North Down	89	73
Omagh	79	99
Strabane	53	38
Northern Ireland total	1,671	2,024

Pupils suffering from dyspraxia in schools in Northern Ireland 2004–05 by district council

District council area	Pupils with dyspraxia	
	Primary	Post primary
Antrim	5	0
Ards	5	7
Armagh	2	0
Ballymena	4	1
Ballymoney	1	0
Banbridge	7	5
Belfast	36	37
Carrickfergus	6	2
Castlereagh	11	17
Coleraine	2	2
Cookstown	9	1
Craigavon	10	2
Derry	16	18
Down	12	6
Dungannon	4	10
Fermanagh	7	2
Larne	6	2
Limavady	2	1
Lisburn	3	1
Magherafelt	6	10
Moyle	1	2
Newry and Mourne	11	11
Newtownabbey	7	6
North Down	5	7
Omagh	3	3
Strabane	3	4
Northern Ireland total	184	157

Notes:

1. Primary figures relate to pupils in year 1 to year 7 only.
2. Figures relate to the area in which schools attended by pupils are located.

Education

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to improve parental involvement in education in Northern Ireland. [22802]

Angela E. Smith: There is significant parental involvement in schools in Northern Ireland through involvement with Boards of Governors of schools and on an individual basis parents are encouraged to take an active interest in their child's education, and recent legislation provides increased rights and avenues for parental involvement.

New regulations on School Development Plans require the extent to which the Board of Governors has consulted with parents in the preparation of the school development plan must be included in the plan.

In the area of pupil services the Department has made funding available to the Education and Library Boards to support work with parents. One Board is employing a Parent Support Officer and two Boards are piloting a home/school/community project.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (SENDO) provides parents with increased rights to have their children with special educational needs educated in mainstream schools, where that is their wish. The new Advice and Information Service and the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service provided by Educational and Library Boards for parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), will provide parents with more SEN related information and a voluntary, informal and independent means of resolving disputes between parents and schools and/or Boards.

The Department plans to issue a new SEN Parents Guide in the coming months and the Department will commence a strategic review of SEN policy in December which will involve engaging with key stakeholders including parents.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Belfast Education and Library Board paid for the services of a consultant from Pricewaterhouse Coopers to fill its chief financial officer post; and whether the cost was shown in the accounts for 2004–05 submitted to the Department of Education.[21795]

Angela E. Smith: The Board negotiated a secondment from PricewaterhouseCoopers for the period 13 September 2004 to 28 October 2005. In 2004–05, the cost incurred was £38,000. This was included in the 2004–05 accounts. I am told that the cost in 2005–06 is £40,600 and this will again be shown in the year-end accounts for this financial year.

Energy Efficiency

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of electricity used by buildings in *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies came from renewable sources in each year since 1997. [17738]

Mr. Hain: From April 2004 the percentage of electricity supplied from renewable sources to NIO buildings in the Stormont Estate, NIPS and FSNI was 25 per cent., 23 per cent., and 7 per cent. respectively.

For previous years the comparable figures were as follows:

Percentage

	2003	2002
NIO	20	0
NIPS	18	0
FSNI	0.4	1.2

Note:
For 2001 and earlier years the figures are NIL

These buildings represent the key buildings in the NIO estate. The national sustainable development target for renewable energy is 10 per cent. by 2008.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Football Grounds (Arrests)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were charged following arrest in or around football grounds in each of the last 10 years. [22816]

Mr. Woodward: The following table details the number of people charged in relation to crimes where the location was a football venue during the period 2001–02 to 2004–05 (2001–02 being the earliest date for which this information is available).

Crimes where the location was a football venue/ground/stadium, Northern Ireland

	Charge/summons
2001–02	17
2002–03	14
2003–04	11
2004–05	14

Illegal Fireworks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many illegal fireworks were seized in Northern Ireland in the last five years. [24156]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable has advised me that the PSNI does not hold this information centrally. It could therefore be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mobile Phones

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance has been issued by his Department to schools in the Province in relation to mobile phone use by children. [22657]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education has not issued guidance to schools in relation to the use of mobile phones by children in schools.

However, in 2001 the N. I. Executive, in conjunction with the Scottish Executive and the National Assembly for Wales, issued a public leaflet on mobile phones and health. It is available on the DHSSPS website www.dhsspsni.gov.uk.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to implement National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommendations in Northern Ireland. [23348]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has been developing proposals for applying National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance in Northern Ireland. I hope to make an announcement shortly on arrangements for implementing the Institute's guidance in Northern Ireland.

NHS Agency Staff

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to reduce the number of agency staff working in the NHS in Northern Ireland. [23195]

Mr. Woodward: The recruitment of staff is a matter for individual health and social services trusts taking into account factors such as needs and available resources. While the use of agency staff, particularly in nursing, is necessary to ensure continuity of services, the Department wishes to reduce the current levels and is already working to address this issue.

The Department is introducing pay modernisation through Agenda for Change to make working as an employee of the HPSS more attractive. In particular, the number of nurses in training has increased by more than 60 per cent. over recent years. As a result, it is expected that this investment in additional student nurses will reduce the number of agency staff required.

Northern Bank Robbery

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people *(a)* are working on the investigation into the Northern bank robbery and *(b)* have been questioned in connection with the Northern bank robbery. [22993]

Mr. Woodward: A dedicated team of detectives have been allocated to the investigation into the Northern bank robbery. The investigation is ongoing and PSNI are working closely with their counterparts in An Garda Siochana.

Progress has been made and PSNI are fully committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Additional officers may be brought into the investigation as new leads emerge but the allocation of resources is a matter for the chief constable.

To date no one has been interviewed in relation to the robbery.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland have been involved in investigating the Northern Bank robbery in each month since it took place, broken down by rank. [23570]

Mr. Woodward: A dedicated team of detectives, headed by a Detective Superintendent, have been allocated to the investigation into the Northern Bank robbery. The investigation is ongoing and PSNI are working closely with their counterparts in An Garda Síochána.

Additional resources have been brought into the investigation to pursue specific lines of inquiry and can be called upon as new leads emerge but the allocation of resources is matter for the Chief Constable. Progress has been made and PSNI are fully committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Prison Service staff retired due to ill health in each year from 1995 to 2005. [22798]

Mr. Woodward: The number of Northern Ireland Prison Service staff retired due to ill health in each year from 1995 to 2005 is as follows:

	Number of staff retired due to ill health
1995	53
1996	74
1997	59

	Number of staff retired due to ill health
1998	53
1999	45
2000	19
2001	15
2002	21
2003	28
2004	34
2005	21 to date

All staff are referred to the Occupational Health Service (OHS) for review of their illness after a period of 28 days sick absence. The OHS will either recommend fit for return to work, a further review of the case at a later date or ill health retirement. Any decision on ill health retirement is made by the OHS and not by the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Note:

The number of ill health retirements dropped in 2000 when approximately 1,000 staff left the service through a voluntary redundancy scheme with the closure of Maze prison.

Occupational Therapists

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many occupational therapists are working in each of the health boards in Northern Ireland. [22804]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of occupational therapists employed within the NI HPSS by health board area as at 31 March 2005

Board area	*Headcount*	*Whole time equivalent*
Northern Board Area	159	143.07
Eastern Board Area	307	273.65
Southern Board Area	128	112.63
Western Board Area	83	76.37
Total	677	605.72

Source:
Human Resource Management System

Paramilitaries

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the level of criminal activity in which paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland are engaged. [22736]

Mr. Woodward: This year's organised crime task force threat assessment confirms that all of the paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland are heavily involved in organised crime as a means of raising finance for their organisations and for personal gain.

The reports by the Independent Monitoring Commission also clearly indicate the extent of paramilitary involvement in organised crime.

Police Vehicles

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* incidents of serious injury involving police vehicles in Northern Ireland were recorded in each of the last five years. [22997]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern has provided the following information:

	Civilians killed	*Members killed*	*Civilians seriously injured*	*Members seriously injured*	*Total*
2000	1	0	99	469	569
2001	1	0	98	478	577
2002	1	1	105	503	610
2003	0	0	84	362	446
2004	1	0	89	356	446

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21321]

Mr. Hain: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

GPs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether general practitioners in Northern Ireland are required to register second jobs in private consultancy or with the Department for Work and Pensions; and how many general practitioners are so registered. [22769]

Mr. Woodward: The sole registration requirement for general practitioners is that they are fully registered medical practitioners. Their names must appear on the medical register held by the General Medical Council.

School Crossing Patrols

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many school crossing patrols there are in each *(a)* education and library board area and *(b)* council district; and what change there has been in the number over the last five years. [23361]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently 816 school crossing patrols in Northern Ireland, divided into each education and library board, and district council, area as follows:

Education and library board area

	Number
Belfast	129
North-Eastern	162
South-Eastern	143
Southern	218
Western	164
Total	816

District council area	Number
Antrim	21
Ards	28
Armagh	39
Ballymena	25
Ballymoney	11
Banbridge	35
Belfast	129
Carrickfergus	14
Castlereagh	16
Coleraine	20
Cookstown	14
Craigavon	57
Derry	82
Down	35
Dungannon	35
Fermanagh	9
Larne	13
Limavady	17
Lisburn	37
Magherafelt	10
Moyle	5
Newry and Mourne	38
Newtownabbey	43
North Down	27
Omagh	37
Strabane	19

Since 2001, there has been a decline in the number of patrols by 50, 35 and 6 in the Belfast, South Eastern and North Eastern boards respectively. Similar information is not available for the Southern and Western Board areas. The decline in numbers is due to a number of factors, including: the replacement of patrols with light-controlled crossings; recruitment difficulties; and, changes in the nature of hazards. In the case of the latter, Boards employ a set of guidelines adapted from those developed by the Local Authorities Road Safety Officers Association (LARSOA). These guidelines permit Boards to make an objective assessment of dangers and hazards, and to determine whether a patrol should be provided, retained, or removed.

School Playing Fields

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many state controlled schools' playing fields in Northern Ireland have been sold since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [22647]

Angela E. Smith: No school playing fields have been sold since 2001.

Surplus School Places

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average number of surplus places in schools in Northern Ireland was in 2000; how many there were on 1 October 2005; and what the projected number of surplus places is for *(a)* 2010 and *(b)* 2015 broken down by (i) school type, (ii) management type and (iii) education and library board. [24038]

Angela E. Smith: In the 2000–01 school year, there were an estimated 12,200 surplus places in controlled primary schools and 12,900 surplus places in maintained primary schools. In the 2004–05 school year these figures increased to an estimated 15,800 in both sectors. In 2000–01 in post-primary schools, there were an estimated 6,500 surplus places in controlled schools and 6,900 in maintained schools. In 2004–05 these figures increased to an estimated 7,500 and 8,200 respectively. I append a table that shows the breakdown of the figures by management type and education and library board area. Figures for the 2005–06 school year are not yet available.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency projections indicate that the number of children of compulsory school age is set to decline by a farther 30,000 over the next 10 years to 2015. From 2004–05 the Department's pupil projection figures indicate that primary school numbers will fall from an estimated 162,200 to 150,900 in 2009–10 (a reduction of 11,300 pupils) and that post-primary school enrolments will fall from an estimated 152,600 to 143,000 (a reduction of 9,600 pupils) in that same period. The figures are not available by management type and projected figures are not currently available to 2015. The projected fall in pupil numbers will not however necessarily lead to a corresponding increase in surplus places—changes to the schools' estate in the intervening period, through the major capital works programme and as a result of proposals from school authorities for closures or amalgamations, should remove a considerable number of surplus places.

		2000–001		2004–05	
Board area school type	Sector	No of schools with surplus places	Estimated number of surplus places	No of schools with surplus places	Estimated number of surplus places
Belfast					
Primary	Controlled	36	3,900	35	5,300
	Maintained	33	2,700	27	3,900
Post-Primary	Controlled	7	1,200	8	1,700
	Maintained	16	1,300	15	1,300
North-Eastern					
Primary	Controlled	56	2,900	44	3,700
	Maintained	39	2,500	32	2,700
Post-Primary	Controlled	15	1,700	18	2,000
	Maintained	12	1,900	17	2,200
South-Eastern					
Primary	Controlled	49	3,400	43	4,300
	Maintained	27	1,900	26	2,400

Board area/school type	Sector	2000-001 No of schools with surplus places	2000-001 Estimated number of surplus places	2004-05 No of schools with surplus places	2004-05 Estimated number of surplus places
Post-Primary	Controlled	11	1,300	17	1,800
	Maintained	8	600	12	700
Southern					
Primary	Controlled	37	1,300	32	1,400
	Maintained	52	2,100	39	2,600
Post-Primary	Controlled	17	1,300	16	1,300
	Maintained	16	1,500	14	1,700
Western					
Primary	Controlled	26	700	20	1,100
	Maintained	72	3,700	62	4,300
Post-Primary	Controlled	8	900	6	700
	Maintained	24	1,700	27	2,200
Overall totals:		561	38,500	510	47,300

Summary

Totals:	2000-01 No of schools with surplus places	2000-01 Estimated number of surplus places	2004-05 No of schools with surplus places	2004-05 Estimated number of surplus places
Primary				
Controlled	204	12,200	174	15,800
Maintained	223	12,900	186	15,800
Post-Primary				
Controlled	58	6,500	65	7,500
Maintained	76	6,900	85	8,200
Totals:	561	38,500	510	47,300

Sustainable Development

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment is made *(a)* of the environmental impact and *(b)* against sustainable development criteria of bids made for contracts awarded by his Department; who makes such assessments; and whether these assessments are published. [17727]

Mr. Hain: Since the framework for sustainable development was launched in 2002, the Department has not embarked on any construction or development work which would warrant an environmental impact or sustainable development assessment.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that private finance initiative projects for which his Department is responsible create the minimum of environmental damage; [17734]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the sustainability and environmental impacts of its private finance initiative projects and the effectiveness of the PFI process to deliver environmentally sustainable projects; [17735]

(3) what steps his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to make the Private Finance Initiative process more accountable and transparent in terms of efforts to achieve environmental sustainability. [17736]

Mr. Hain: The NIO is not engaged currently in any PFI projects nor has it any immediate plans for any construction or development work which would warrant assessments of the kind you envisage.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Teacher Assaults

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many parents were prosecuted for attacks on teachers in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [22660]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Waste Disposal

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals *(a)* have been prosecuted and *(b)* have prosecutions pending for illegal cross-border dumping of waste in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21933]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service assumed the ability to take prosecution cases for waste offences at the end of 2002. Charges relate to the illegal deposit of waste, not its origin. The agency has

estimated the number of individuals prosecuted and prosecutions pending where it has observed waste originating from R.OI. In 2003 one individual was prosecuted; there were no such prosecutions in 2004; and, in 2005, five individuals were prosecuted. Currently prosecutions are pending against 30 individuals for incidents that took place between 2002 and 25 October 2005.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 3 November 2005

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Employment Rights

10. **Ms Katy Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions have taken place between the Government and the trade unions on employment rights. [24343]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department holds regular meetings with trade unions and employer organisations on employment rights.

Oil/Gas Reserves

11. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the current reserves of oil and gas are; and if he will make a statement. [24344]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department's latest estimates show that at the end of 2004 reserves of UK oil and gas amounted to between seven and 17 billion barrels of oil equivalent, with a central estimate of around 11 billion barrels. In addition it is estimated that between six and 26 billion barrels could be produced as a result of further exploration and appraisal. Full details are on DTI's oil and gas website.

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

12. **Paul Farrelly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations have been received by his Department and Advantage West Midlands from organisations in north Staffordshire regarding the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. [24345]

Ian Pearson: I am advised that neither the Department of Trade and Industry nor the Government Office for the West Midlands nor Advantage West Midlands has received any representations from organisations in North Staffordshire specifically regarding the Strategy.

Company Law Reform Bill

13. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals he expects to make in the Company Law Reform Bill on tackling employment abuses by UK companies operating abroad; and if he will make a statement. [24346]

Alun Michael: The Company Law Reform Bill offers a fair, modern, and effective framework of company law, and will promote high standards of company behaviour and corporate governance. A company law bill is not the place to directly address employment abuses by UK companies operating abroad. We will continue to address such issues in other ways.

15. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Whether he expects the provisions of the Company Law Reform Bill to help to prevent labour rights abuses by UK companies operating overseas. [24348]

Alun Michael: The Company Law Reform Bill offers a fair, modern, and effective framework of company law, and will promote high standards of company behaviour and corporate governance. A company law bill is not the place to directly address employment abuses by UK companies operating abroad. We will continue to address such issues in other ways.

Uganda

14. **Mark Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the level of British business investment in Uganda has been in each of the last three years. [24347]

Ian Pearson: The latest figures from the Office for National Statistics, show the UK's level of foreign direct investment in Uganda amounted to £54 million at the end of 2001, £25 million at the end of 2002, and £31 million at the end of 2003.

Nuclear Power Generation

16. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the future of nuclear power generation in the UK. [24349]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government will publish proposals on energy policy, including civil nuclear power, next year. Climate change and the reliance on imported energy supplies require an assessment of all options for future UK energy policy. These assessments will be made prior to the publishing of our proposals.

UK Manufacturing

17. **Nia Griffith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to limit the flow of manufacturing jobs out of the UK. [24350]

Alun Michael: The Government believe that we need a successful manufacturing sector with high skilled jobs and is committed to providing the right macro-economic conditions and support through the Manufacturing Strategy to help companies to compete and thrive in the global market.

Monopolies/Monopsonies

18. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will review the terms of reference of the Office of Fair Trading in relation to local monopolies and monopsonies. [24351]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No, I have no such plans. It is a matter for the Office of Fair Trading to consider the factors relevant to its analysis of markets in such circumstances.

Chinese Exports

19. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on EU trade restrictions on exports from China. [24353]

Ian Pearson: The textiles agreement between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce concluded in June and subsequently revised in September limits imports into the EU from China of 10 textiles and clothing products until the end of 2007. This agreement provided a level of stability for trade in these products and avoided the uncertainty of the alternative of a succession of product-by-product safeguard investigations

Debt Recovery

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs on increasing enforcement powers for financial institutions seeking to recover unsecured debts; and if he will make a statement. [24302]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI was consulted on DCA proposals to increase enforcement powers for financial institutions seeking to recover unsecured debts, in particular proposals to widen access to charging orders, during development of the "Effective Enforcement" White Paper of March 2003. DTI and DCA continue to liaise closely on the planned reforms of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and related issues.

It is the Government's position that responsible creditors who are owed money and having gained valid judgments through the courts should have the right to enforce that judgment by the most appropriate means available.

Such action is balanced by proposals to enhance consumer protections, including proposed tightening of the licensing procedure through the Consumer Credit Bill to tackle unscrupulous lenders at source, appropriate limits to the application of charging orders, and action to ensure greater use of "time order" provisions.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22576]

Alan Johnson: The information as follows:

Department/ Agency	*Title of consultation*	*Commencement date*	*Deadline for responses*
DTI	Use of net and gross calorific values for calculating energy balances	28 July 2005	31 October 2005
National Weights & Measures Laboratory	RRO for self-verification—Weights and Measures Act 1985 to include "adjusters"	29 July 2005	29 October 2005
DTI	Cost recovery arrangements for protected energy companies in energy administration	4 August 2005	27 October 2005
DTI	Future sourcing of DTI energy price data	15 August 2005	11 November 2005
Insolvency Service	Implementation of UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency in Great Britain	22 August 2005	14 November 2005
National Weights & Measures Laboratory	Consultation on the draft Regulations implementing the Measuring Instruments Directive/MED	23 August 2005	14 November 2005
Patents Office	Consultation on whether there is a continuing need for a UK Classification Key (UKC Key)	30 August 2005	22 November 05
DTI	Part 9 Enterprise Act—easier release of information for civil court cases	23 August 2005	18 November 2005
DTI	Consultation on proposals to implement two EC Directives on the safety of cosmetic products	8 September 2005	25 November 2005
DTI	Statutory Review of the Renewables Obligation	19 September 2005	9 December 2005
DTI	Notice pursuant to section 91(2) of the Fair Trading Act 1973—Revocation of Monopolies & Restrictive Practices (Dental Goods) Order 1951	28 September 2005	28 October 2005
DTI	Notice pursuant to section 91(2) of the Fair Trading Act 1973—Revocation of Monopolies & Restrictive Practices (Imported Hardwood and Softwood Timber) Order 1960	28 September 2005	28 October 2005
DTI	Notice pursuant to section 91(2) of the Fair Trading Act 1973—Revocation of Restriction on Agreements (Estate Agents) Order 1970	28 September 2005	28 October 2005
DTI	Advancing equality for men and women: government's proposals for a gender duty	4 October 2005	12 January 2006

Department/ Agency	Title of consultation	Commencement date	Deadline for responses
Patents Office	Consultation on proposed changes to the Patent Office's business hours for receiving and according dates to applications, forms and other documentation	12 October 2005	6 January 2006
Patents Office	Modernisation and consolidation of the Patent Rules: An informal consultation	17 October 2005	30 November 2005
Export Credit Guarantee Department	Interim Response to ECGD's consultation on changes to its anti-bribery and corruption procedures introduced in December 2004	21 October 2005	18 November 2005
DTI	Amendment to the Noise of Outdoor Machinery Directive (2000/14/EC)	26 October 2005	23 November 2005
DTI	Draft Order raising the Maximum Penalty for Persistent Misuse of Electronic Communications Networks or Electronic Communications Services to Tackle Silent Calls	31 October 2005	24 January 2006

Departmental Staff

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* other self-employed persons are working for his Department; and what the cost is estimated to be (i) in 2005–06 and (ii) in each of the last five years. [17309]

Alan Johnson: The information is as follows.

(a) As at 1 October 2005 a total of 332 consultants and agency staff were working in core DTI (excluding UK Trade and Investments and DTIs arms length bodies).

(b) The Department's normal policy is not to directly engage self-employed people. However it does procure the services of individuals with specialist knowledge—often academics—to inform projects and policy decisions. These individuals are sometimes engaged directly, and at other times are remunerated via the budget for specific projects. Numbers of such individuals are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

(i) and (ii); The Department does not hold central records of the cost of consultants and agency staff as a sub-group of total costs for consultancy, agency and services contracts. The figures could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Nuisance Phone Calls

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to tackle nuisance telephone calls; and if he will make a statement. [17672]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 14 October 2005]:* The Government take the issue of nuisance telephone calls very seriously because of the distress they cause to consumers. The Communications Act 2003 provides powers to the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to take action against silent calls, including the imposition of financial penalties, against persons who cause unnecessary annoyance, inconvenience or anxiety through persistent misuse of an electronic communications network. Ofcom has announced a wide range of measures against silent calls and further detailed information is available from: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/media/news/2005/10/nr_20051031.

In addition, my Department has issued a consultation document, in which we propose to increase the maximum penalty for persistent misuse of an electronic communications network from £5,000 to £50,000 and a copy will shortly be available from: http://www.dti.gov.uk/industries/telecoms/public_consultations.html.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will remove the upper age limit for entitlement to statutory sick pay as part of the age equality regulations. [23273]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is the Government's intention to amend provisions that will remove the upper age limit for entitlement to statutory sick pay in the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations which are due to come into force next year.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Goods and Services (Discrimination)

23. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what plans the Government have to prevent discrimination in the provision of goods and services. [24357]

Meg Munn: Current legislation outlaws race, sex and disability discrimination in the provision of goods and services. The current Equality Bill will extend this protection to cover religion and belief.

We have made clear our intention to provide full rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people as soon as possible. We are considering the case for age discrimination legislation in this area via the current Discrimination Law Review.

Domestic Violence Action Plan

24. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the

Solicitor-General on the impact of the National Action Plan for Domestic Violence on the number of successful prosecutions for related crimes. [24358]

Meg Munn: As a member of the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence, I have regular discussions with the Solicitor General and other Ministers. Since the plan's March launch, prosecutions have risen, but it is early days and the plan outlines commitments to address this issue more fully.

Women Engineering Graduates

25. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what percentage of engineering graduates are women; and if she will make a statement. [24359]

Meg Munn: In 2002–03, 17 per cent. of students obtaining their first degree in Engineering and Technology were female. For postgraduate students the female percentage in 2002–03 was 23.1 per cent.

The Government has invested a total £6.9 million into a resource centre to work specifically with employers enabling them to tackle the barriers which prevent girls and women seeing science and technology including engineering as an attractive and rewarding career. Although engineering remains an area of low female participation, the resource centre is working closely with other professional organisations, such as the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Engineering Technology Board, to develop strategic approaches to tackle this issue.

Breastfeeding

26. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to encourage acceptance of breastfeeding in public places. [24360]

Meg Munn: The Government are committed to the promotion of breastfeeding. We are examining women's experiences of feeding in public places through the National Infant Feeding Survey 2005, to inform our thinking in this area.

Through the annual National Breastfeeding Awareness Week, the Department of Health encourages breastfeeding in public places.

Women High-flyers

27. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what estimate she has made of the number of women in senior board positions in each of the last five years. [24361]

Meg Munn: Female-held FTSE 100 directorships have risen from 5.8 per cent. in 2000 to nearly 10 per cent. in 2004. The Cabinet Minister for Women will later this month be launching the 2005 Female FTSE Report produced by Cranfield university to see what further progress has been made. However, in 2004 17 per cent. of new FTSE 100 board appointments have been women, up from 13 per cent. in 2003 and 10.5 per cent. in 2002. The total number of female directorships in the FTSE 100 was 110, up from 101 the previous year. The number of boards with more than one female member has risen from 22 to 29 in 2004. It is disappointing to note that 31 of the FTSE 100 companies are run by men-only boards. Of the new women appointed in 2004, 33 per cent. already had FTSE experience and incoming non-executive directors are also far more likely than the directors they replace to have public or voluntary sector experience.

PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects to reply to the letter dated 16 May from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding the Tear Fund. [23930]

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development replied to the hon. Member on 29 September in response to his letter of 16 May and his follow-up letter of 29 July. I have placed a copy of the letter in the Libraries of the House.

Letter from Mr. Gareth Thomas to Mr. Alex Salmond, dated 29 September 2005:

Thank you for your letter of 29 July to the Prime Minister enclosing a postcard from your constituent about Tearfund's "HIV/AIDS and Children" campaign. I am responding as the Minister who leads on the issues raised.

It is a terrible human catastrophe and presents an unprecedented challenge to the developing world and to the eradication of poverty. The cost in terms of human life and economic burden on national governments, communities and families is enormous. Women and young people, including the rising number of orphans are particularly vulnerable.

The Government is taking action. Last year we published "Taking Action—the UK's strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world", and committed at least £1.5 billion to tackling HIV and AIDS over the next three years. Of this, at least £150 million will go into supporting orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. The UK was one of the first countries to endorse UNICEF's "Strategic Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Children Made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS".

DFID is working directly with national governments to support the development and implementation of national programmes for the support and care of children affected. In Mozambique we have given funding to help the Government properly track its programmes for orphans and vulnerable children to ensure that aid reaches the children that need it most. In Kenya we are directly supporting community based organisations to help them deliver home based care services, including to children affected by AIDS.

We are investigating the best ways to build systems that provide support to vulnerable children and their families, possibly in the form of monthly child or family allowances. This will simplify the tracking of funds from government budgets to the poorest families. The cash received through these transfers enables families and communities to make their own decisions about the best way to improve their livelihoods and care for their children. Another important area in which we are investing is the health of children living with HIV. For example we have supported trials of a cheap and widely available drug (co-trimoxazole) which have shown that it can halve the death rate for HIV infected children in Africa. We are also supporting a new research programme to assess how to provide antiretroviral treatment for children in resource-constrained settings.

Monitoring development expenditure by category, as your campaign highlights, is an area where all of us, the international community, donor organisations and national governments can all do better. DFID has recently introduced a new system to

enable us to better monitor our support for orphans and vulnerable children. Activities which will be recorded include special programmes for children made vulnerable by AIDS, cash transfers to vulnerable families, exemption from school fees and help with food.

DFID also believes that monitoring and evaluation are crucial with regards to other financing instruments such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). DFID has funded work specifically to develop the Global Fund's capacity for monitoring and evaluation. We believe that progress is being made, but there is more to do.

We are delighted to be co-hosting with UNICEF, later this year, the Global Partnership Forum on children affected by AIDS. We anticipate that this Forum will examine how funding can better reach community based organisations. Bottlenecks that prevent funding getting to those most in need must be identified and unlocked We see this as a crucial part of the wider efforts at "Making the Money Work"—a process being led by UNAIDS to ensure greater harmonisation and co-ordination alongside the additional resources now being made available to tackle HIV and AIDS The steps we are taking are a start, but there is much still for all of us to do.

I hope this is helpful.

Ministerial Pensions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister what the cost to public funds would be of providing the full pension package to which they are entitled to *(a)* him and *(b)* the Lord Chancellor were they to retire today. [18572]

The Prime Minister: The information requested cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs.

TREASURY

Business Mileage Allowance

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will uprate the business mileage allowances payable to *(a)* people using their own cars for business purposes and *(b)* company car drivers in line with fuel prices. [24632]

John Healey: The statutory tax free mileage allowance rates for people using their own cars for business purposes are intended to cover all expenses relating to the running costs of a car. They are set at a level to encourage the use of more environmentally friendly cars. The Chancellor keeps these rates under review and considers changes in the context of the Budget and pre-Budget report statements.

Company car drivers are entitled to tax relief for the actual cost of fuel used on business mileage, but to make life easier for all, HMRC sets Advisory Fuel Rates which it will accept as, on average, reflecting fuel costs without giving rise to a tax or NICs liability. The Advisory Fuel Rates were reviewed and uprated in July 2005 to reflect the sustained increase in the price of fuel. HMRC is committed to review the rates when there is a variation by 10 per cent. from the fuel prices used at that time.

Capital Gains Tax

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of beneficiaries of *(a)* taper relief and *(b)* exemption from capital gains accrued but unrealised at death in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06, broken down by income decile; and if he will make a statement. [22773]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of individuals liable to capital gains tax in 2003–04 (the latest year for which data are available) benefiting from taper relief is shown in the following table.

Income decile[1]	*Number of individuals benefiting from taper relief*
No income subject to income tax	11,000
Bottom decile	7,000
2nd	5,000
3rd	5,000
4th	6,000
5th	6,000
6th	6,000
7th	7,000
8th	9,000
9th	14,000
Top	41,000
Total	117,000

[1] Income deciles have been defined in terms of income subject to tax for income taxpayers only. Income is before the deduction of any allowances and reliefs.

In addition, 10,000 trusts liable to capital gains tax in 2003–04 benefited from taper relief.

The second part of the question concerns capital gains accrued but unrealised at death. We have estimated the number of estates passing on death where the inheritance tax payable was less than the total tax (inheritance tax and capital gains tax) that would have been payable if gains on assets had been realised before death. Our estimate is that approximately 30,000 estates a year fell or will fall into this category in 2004–05 and 2005–06. A breakdown by income decile is not available.

Cash Machines

Ben Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from members of the public about fee-charging cash machines. [24422]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury has received a number of letters from members of the public about cash machines.

There are about 20,000 fee-charging cash machines in the UK. They are mostly found in "convenience" locations like pubs and shops. Virtually all bank and building society cash machines are free. There are over 33,000 free cash machines in the UK and over 97 per cent. of withdrawals are made at such machines.

The Government believe that cash machine charges are an important area of public policy and is continuing to monitor the situation. The Government would be concerned if those on low incomes were found to be incurring disproportionate costs as a result of cash machine charges. Research into how the financially excluded access cash and transmit money, being undertaken through the Financial Inclusion Task Force, should identify, among other things, whether this is the case.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to improve the flow of information from HM Revenue and Customs to the Child Support Agency. [24584]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC already provides information to CSA to help them locate non-resident parents. Work is ongoing between HMRC and DWP officials as to how to further support CSA.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in the Kettering constituency. [24380]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury owns no land or property in the Kettering constituency.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's skills development plan. [23917]

John Healey: The Department's Head of HR transformation and learning has delegated responsibility for developing and implementing the Department's skills development plan.

HMRC Staff

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by HM Revenue and Customs, broken down by *(a)* sex and *(b)* ethnicity. [24478]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs employed the following numbers of staff at 1 October 2005, broken down by *(a)* sex and *(b)* ethnicity:

(a) Sex

	Number
Male	43,783
Female	59,105
Total	102,888

(b) Ethnicity

	Headcount
Asian—Bangladeshi	152
Asian—Indian	1,782
Asian—Pakistani	413
Any other Asian background	364
Black—African	397
Black—Caribbean	486
Any other Black background	55
Any Chinese background	121
Mixed Asian and White	165
Mixed Black-African and White	39
Mixed Black-Caribbean and White	98
Any other mixed ethnic background	217
Any other ethnic background	343
Any White background	54,503
Unknown	43,753
Total	102,888

Marine Diesel Derogation

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to safeguard the UK derogation on the taxation of marine diesel after 31 December 2006. [24558]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to what I said on the Floor of the House on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 865W.

North Sea Oil

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the revenue from North sea oil in financial year 2005–06; and what estimate of such revenue informed the Budget in March. [24634]

John Healey: Budget 2005 projected North sea revenues at £7.1 billion for 2005–06. The Government will publish updated forecasts for the UK public finances in the 2005 pre-Budget report as usual, taking into account all relevant factors and developments.

Olympic Lottery Game

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will apply the tax revenue from the Olympic lottery game to the funding of the Olympic games. [24044]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government intends that the same principles that apply to the existing national lottery should apply to any Olympic themed games. We have made it clear that it is not our intention to fund the 2012 games from central Government tax receipts. In its report on London's bid published on 6 June, the IOC recognised that "The budgeting process is very detailed and meticulous, and assumptions are well supported and they are achievable".

Pensions

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 51–52W, on pensions, what further information he would need to collect to enable estimates to be broken down by *(a)* decile and *(b)* taxable income band. [24492]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: To provide estimates of the cost of tax relief on contributions to approved pension funds by decile and income band, we would require better information on the income distribution of those contributing to occupational schemes.

Most contributions to approved pension funds are into occupational schemes. As we do not have administrative data on contributions to these schemes, our estimates of the cost of income tax relief for pension contributions make use of ONS estimates of total contributions by individuals to approved occupational schemes.

We then make broad assumptions about the income distribution of those contributing to approved occupational schemes using evidence from the Family Resources Survey. Although this approach is adequate

for an approximate split between higher rate taxpayers and others, we do not consider it sufficiently robust for detailed distributional information on pension reliefs.

Petrol/Diesel (Duties Revenue)

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of how much revenue will arise from *(a)* fuel duty and *(b)* VAT from the sale of petrol and diesel for financial year 2005–06; and what estimate for these revenues informed the Budget in March. [24633]

John Healey: Fuel duty revenue projections for 2005–06 were published in the financial statement and Budget report 2005 table C8, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. These projections will be up-dated in the forthcoming pre-Budget report 2005.

HM Revenue and Customs does not collect data on VAT revenues raised from specific goods and services. Projections of VAT revenues are based on estimates of overall expenditure.

Public Spending

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of public spending per head was in the UK in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* Government office region and *(b)* local authority area. [24616]

Mr. Des Browne: Public expenditure per head by NUTS1 region (equivalent to Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Government office regions of England) for the years 1999–2000 to 2004–05 is shown in table 8.2 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2005 (Cm 6521). Comparable data for 1998–99 are shown in table 8.2 of PESA 2004 (Cm 6201). Equivalent data for 1997–98 are not available on a comparable basis because of changes to the definition of expenditure that can be identified as benefiting a particular region, and changes to the methodology departments follow when allocating expenditure to regions.

Public expenditure data per head by local authority area are not available.

Tax Credits

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes to introduce a cap on the deduction of gross pension contributions in tax credit income assessments. [24265]

Dawn Primarolo: The income assessment for the child and working tax credits is based generally on income tax rules and for tax credit purposes, we have no plans to cap contributions to approved pension schemes.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of *(a)* telephones, *(b)* telephone calls and *(c)* other telephone charges relating to the tax credits helpline were in each year from 1999–2000 to 2004–05. [13713]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits helpline handled its first calls in 2002. Costs incurred in each financial year since 2000–01 are shown in the following table:

(a) Telephones capital costs.

(b) Telephone system and apparatus rental and telephone call charges. Call charges and rental charges cannot be separated.

(c) Other telephone charges (e.g. equipment purchases, consumables, mobile phone subscriptions, recoverable VAT, operator charges, and maintenance).

2000–01

	£000
Telephone capital costs	840
Telephone call/rental charges	0
Telephone other charges	0
Total	840

2001–02

	£000
Telephone capital costs	0
Telephone call/rental charges	0
Telephone other charges	0
Total	0

2002–03

	£000
Telephone capital costs	5,250
Telephone call/rental charges	1,750
Telephone other charges	170
Total	7,170

2003–04

	£000
Telephone capital costs	1,330
Telephone call/rental charges	3,390
Telephone other charges	1,660
Total	6,380

2004–05

	£000
Telephone capital costs	330
Telephone call/rental charges	2,020
Telephone other charges	930
Total	3,280

HOME DEPARTMENT

Community Offender Panels

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on *(a)* the performance of piloted community offender panels and *(b)* proposals for their wider implementation. [23698]

Hazel Blears: With funding from the Home Office, a pilot community offender panel has been set up in Chard in Somerset. This is a local initiative run by volunteers and overseen by a paid probation officer. Early indications suggest this joint volunteer and agency approach is working well. We await a full evaluation.

We are also funding a number of other community justice related initiatives, including the Liverpool community justice centre and the Salford community justice initiative. We hope these initiatives will encourage criminal justice agencies to work with local authorities and voluntary and community organisations across the country to develop the community justice approach further.

Departmental Websites

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on updating the Department's website www.homeoffice.gov.uk since it was established. [6914]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The investment in maintaining the Home Office website is as follows:

	£
2005–06 (up to 31 July 2005)	708,996.86
2004–05	876,072.04
2003–04	560,281.47
2002–03	112,817.67
2001–02	54,305.00
2000–01	26,064.10
1999–2000	10,735.55

In the last few years costs have increased as the site is being redeveloped to ensure it meets the needs of all users and is more accessible.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the websites that come under his Department's responsibility; what the cost was of each in the last year for which figures are available; and how many visitors there were to each site in that year. [15902]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The chart lists all sites the Home Office currently has and visits to those in the last year. We are aiming to consolidate our sites so that more information is accessible on our central sites rather than separate sites. The information on costs for all Home Office websites is not held centrally and could not be collected without disproportionate cost.

Domain name	*Total page visits*[1]
www.apc.gov.uk	14,434
www.ask-the-football-fans.gov.uk	867
www.assetsrecovery.gov.uk	26,196
www.bicester-centre.org.uk	3,216
www.bichardinquiry.org.uk	30,372
www.careers.homeoffice.gov.uk	219,945
www.countingrules.homeoffice.gov.uk	3,459
www.connected.gov.uk	27,675
www.crimereduction.gov.uk	1,759,538
www.crimestatistics.gov.uk	151,785
www.drugs.gov.uk	451,131
www.getgunsoffthestreets.co.uk	3,767
www.good2bsecure.co.uk	16,071
www.hmpenterprises.co.uk	30,655
www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk	1,567,977
www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk	159,120
www.homeoffice.gov.uk	6,547,860
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds	753,480
www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk	5,374,805
www.policecouldyou.co.uk	2,300,560
www.policereform.gov.uk	244,927
www.ppo.gov.uk	24,554
www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk	26,988
www.russellcommission.org	18,266
www.secureyourmotor.gov.uk	62,161
www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk	80,416
www.specialconstables.gov.uk	121,674
www.surveillancecommissioners.gov.uk	14,854
www.takingastand.co.uk	9,567
www.technicaladvisory.co.uk	833
www.thinkuknow.co.uk	205,845
www.together.gov.uk	142,551
www.uknationality.gov.uk	146,098
www.workingintheuk.gov.uk	3,668,035
www.yearofthevolunteer.org	249,915
www.zahidmubarekinquiry.org.uk	32,793

[1] 31 August 2004 to 1 August 2005

Domestic Violence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1781W, on domestic violence, on what frequency surveys are conducted to gauge the level of interpersonal violence suffered by *(a)* children and *(b)* adults over 60 years; and what steps are taken to ensure comparability between the results obtained in each such survey. [18790]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office currently assesses violence against children aged under 16 through the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey part of which measures victimisation of children aged 10 to 15, including assaults with and without injury. The results on victimisation from the 2003 survey have been published (see findings 246) and data will also be available from further sweeps of the survey in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) measures levels of violence against adults (ages 16 and over) living in private households, and as part of its core measures includes domestic violence. Risks of domestic violence are published annually by age group for men and women, including ages 45–64, 65–74 and 75 and over.

The British Crime Survey is conducted on a continuous basis, having used the same essential methodology since it began in 1982 to ensure comparability over time.

However, it is recognised that the core BCS measure of domestic violence is likely to be an underestimate as some victims may be unwilling to report experience of domestic violence to an interviewer. The special self-completion module on interpersonal violence (which measures domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking) is not asked of respondents aged 60 and over. The issue of "elder abuse" in common with child abuse is better explored using dedicated surveys.

Sustainable Development

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps have been taken by his Department to review its arrangements for public reporting of its sustainable development impacts; [16196]

(2) what arrangements his Department has in place to report publicly on its key sustainable development impacts. [16197]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office currently reports publicly on its key sustainable development impacts through its annual report, sustainable development pages on its website and by contributing to the sustainable development in the Government annual report. In addition a separate annual sustainable development report is published for the prison estate. In line with the commitments made in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the Home Office will publish its own Sustainable Development Action Plan in December 2005, which will be followed by annual sustainable development reports from December 2006 onwards.

Equality and Diversity

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Department has spent promoting equality and diversity in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [14663]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office is fully committed to the equality and diversity agenda and has policies and processes in place to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination on any grounds. The Department actively promotes the equality and diversity agenda in developing policies on its range of public responsibilities and in its treatment of its staff. The information provided for the Home Office covers the core directorates and devolved areas including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, HM Prison Service and UK Passport Service.

Home Office policy and processes on promoting equality and diversity

Key examples of the range of work done by the Home Office in promoting equality and diversity since 2000 are as follows:

Setting by Ministers and regular monitoring of race employment targets for the Home Office and its public services (i.e. police service, Prison Service, national probation service).

Ongoing provision of Race Equality Grants funding which promote race equality community and give ethnic minority communities more access and influence on policy makers and service providers.

Support for staff on the Cabinet Office Pathways scheme for ethnic minority staff and the Disability Bursary Scheme.

Establishment and funding of staff networks supporting black and ethnic minority staff, disabled staff and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual members of staff.

Annual involvement in the National Mentoring Consortium to help support undergraduate minority ethnic staff in gaining employment after graduation.

Regular reviews of work-life balance policies and introduction of different working patterns for staff that includes part-time working, job-sharing, home-working and compressed hours schemes. Provision of child care options, including in 2005 the launch of the Childcare Voucher Scheme. In 2000–01 a mandatory Diversity Awareness Training Programme in the core Home Office took place which reached nearly 3,000 staff.

Positive action training for women, black and minority ethnic staff and disabled staff held in 2001.

An annual diversity week of events to promote diversity issues to Home Office staff since 2002.

A dedicated step by step guide on race impact assessment for use by Home Office staff was launched in July 2004.

In January 2005, the Home Secretary launched "Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's Strategy to Increase Race Equality and Community Cohesion" which sets out one strand of the Government's overall drive to improve fairness and opportunities for all in Britain.

Publication of the review of the Home Office Race Equality Scheme in May 2005.

In July 2004, the Home Office launched a Group-wide five Year Race and Diversity Programme as endorsed by the Department's Group Executive Board. The programme's aims are to develop a representative work force at all levels (including the Senior civil service), improve the public perception of fairness in Home Office policies, drive out prejudicial attitudes and behaviours and improve the diversity of staff. A range of projects have been introduced under its three work strands: ownership and leadership; people management; and, business management. These include:

Publishing checklists that set out what is expected of senior leaders, line managers and staff.

Testing for inappropriate behaviour during the 2005 senior management promotion exercises.

Launching a new form that introduced monitoring on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and belief for HR processes, and for the Home Office to identify, investigate and take positive action to address any disparities in the outcomes for under-represented groups in its work force.

Launching a four level "Development Plus" programme to provide positive action development for Home Office staff, targeting under-represented groups.

Introducing a pilot mentoring scheme for staff in under-represented groups.

Implementing a Disability Action Plan, including a review of the use Disability (Two Ticks) symbol.

Compulsory diversity awareness training for staff at all levels in the core Home Office, Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) and Prison Service during 2005.

IND's development of its own Diversity Action Plan "Towards 2010' as an integrated strategy on diversity across IND leadership, staff management and business delivery areas.

Prison Service's ongoing work on developing a range of leaflets setting out the responsibilities and rights of staff and prisoners under equal opportunities legislation.

Financial expenditure on promoting equality and diversity

The following table sets out the Department's estimated annual expenditure (where available) on promoting the equality and diversity agenda between 2000–05.

	£ million
2000–01	[1]1.1
2001–02	18–3
2002–03	17–8
2003–04	18.5
2004–05	15–9
Total	71.6

[1] 2000–01—The figure excludes figures for Prison Service which are not available.

The rise in expenditure during the period 2000 to 2002 represents an increase in the Department's overall commitment to diversity initiatives and also takes account of new directorates which received funding to promote diversity and equality.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what training is obligatory for members of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's Specialist Investigation Service; [19951]

(2) whether all members of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's Specialist Investigation Service are trained in appropriate interviewing techniques. [19952]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

This is essentially a matter for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Training requirements for staff are subject to "in house" arrangements at the NSPCC and would not fall under the jurisdiction of the DfES. However, there is an expectation that the NSPCC, along with other organisations involved in child protection would follow Government guidance such as "Working Together To Safeguard Children" (1999) and "Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Inter-Agency Issues" (2002). Local authorities purchasing work from the NSPCC would also need to quality assure that work.

Police

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, under the fitness for purpose review of police forces in England and Wales, the existing revenue and capital balances of each police authority will be ring-fenced to be spent in the current areas of operation in cases where police forces are amalgamated. [23934]

Hazel Blears: Forces and police authorities have been asked to respond to the challenges set out in Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary's review of force structures. Shortlists of options for restructuring were submitted at the end of October and are currently under consideration. Firm proposals for restructuring in each area will be submitted to the Home Secretary by the end of December 2005. We shall also consider what accountability mechanisms will need to be in place in a restructured service, including financial issues.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase the amount of time spent by police officers on the beat. [23125]

Hazel Blears: Assigning police officers to foot/car beat patrol and the duties they undertake is ultimately a matter for chief constables. My Department does work with the police service to reduce the bureaucratic burden and we are making good progress by, for example, cutting nearly 9,000 unnecessary forms; civilianising posts; rolling out the penalty notice for disorder scheme; and ensuring forces have the best scientific and technological support—like video identity parades, electronic fingerprinting and the online Violent and Sex Offender's Register—so that our police spend more time actually in communities, tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and reassuring the public. The Frontline Policing Measure shows that in 2004–05 Thames Valley police officers spent an average of 69.3 per cent. of their time on frontline duties compared with the national average of 64.1 per cent.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are suspended for *(a)* less than three months, *(b)* more than six months, *(c)* more than 12 months and *(d)* more than 24 months, broken down by rank, in each police force in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [23702]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what relative importance will be given to *(a)* respect for regional boundaries and *(b)* local identity in reaching decisions on re-organised police force areas. [22108]

Hazel Blears: We consider co-terminosity with regional boundaries and local identity as very important features. To support the development of proposals for restructuring, a toolkit and guidance has been sent to all police authorities and police forces to assist them with an evaluation of options. The guidance, which includes a weighting for each of the design criteria for force restructuring (including co-terminosity with regional boundaries and identity), is available on the police reform website at http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/police-reform/.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what local consultations he plans to conduct in Worcestershire on the reorganisation of police forces. [22113]

Hazel Blears: I understand both West Mercia Police Authority and the West Mercia chief constable plan to conduct wide ranging consultations within the police force area prior to submitting their proposals for restructuring in December.

Recruitment Agencies

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many licences were issued to recruitment agencies in the UK to employ immigrant workers in 2004–05. [19046]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

On 1 May 2004, the Government set up the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) to regulate access of nationals of the new member states (except Cyprus and Malta) to the labour market and to restrict access to benefits.

The Government are committed to publish data from the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) on a quarterly basis. The latest quarterly statistics for the period 1 May 2004 to 30 June 2005 were published on 23 August 2005. The next monitoring report will be published at the end of November 2005.

The report states that in total, there were 232,000 applicants to the WRS between 1 May 2004 and 30 June 2005 of whom up to 30 per cent. may have already been in the UK before 1 May 2004. 220,000 of these applicants were issued with Worker Registration certificates and cards.

A copy of the report is available on the IND website:

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.html

Most non-EEA nationals coming to the UK for skilled employment require a work permit. Work permits can be issued in any sector, as long as the relevant requirements are met. They are issued for the duration of the post on offer, up to a maximum of five years.

The employer applies to Work Permits (UK) for the work permit on behalf of the migrant. They must show that all the relevant criteria are met. This includes that a genuine vacancy exists which requires the relevant level of skills and that the employer cannot recruit an EEA worker for the role. Work permits can be issued for vacancies in any sector but are not issued to employment agencies.

Since 1995, employment agencies operating in Great Britain no longer require a licence in order to trade. The previous licensing arrangements required by the Employment Agencies Act 1973 were found not to provide an effective control and were repealed in 1995. Only a small percentage of new applicants or licence renewals were rejected and EAS inspectors found breaches of the legislation among those with licences. When the previous licensing arrangements were repealed they were replaced by new powers, which allow the DTI's Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate to apply to an employment tribunal to prohibit unsuitable persons from running employment agencies and employment businesses, for periods of up to 10 years. In addition, the EAS Inspectorate can prosecute an agency in a magistrates court, where the court can impose a maximum fine of £5,000 for each offence.

Religious Hatred

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what definition he uses of religious hatred. [21563]

Paul Goggins: For the purposes of the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill currently before Parliament "religious hatred" means hatred against a group of persons defined by religious belief or lack of religious belief.

This definition does not seek to define what amounts to a religion or religious belief. It will be for the courts to determine whether a religion or belief falls within this definition.

DEFENCE

Aircraft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft of each type were *(a)* withdrawn from active service and *(b)* mothballed in each of the last three years. [17694]

Mr. Ingram: The numbers of aircraft withdrawn from active service, or placed in storage are listed in the following tables. The figures in the first table include aircraft lost as a result of accidents and operational incidents. The table also includes commercially owned military registered (COMR) aircraft.

'Mothballed" has been taken to mean aircraft placed in storage. As part of normal fleet management, aircraft will be rotated through storage to replace aircraft undergoing repair, maintenance or upgrade programmes.

In compiling the answer it has come to light that aircraft were unintentionally omitted from the table in the previous answer I gave on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2125W. These are the Harrier GR7 and Tornado GR4 both in 2004–05 and are now included in the following table.

Aircraft withdrawn from service

Aircraft type	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Sea Harrier	8	9	8
Harrier T8	1	—	—
Harrier GR7	—	—	1
Harrier T10	—	1	1
Jaguar GR1 A	2	—	3
Jaguar T2A	1	—	3
Canberra T Mk4	—	—	2
Tornado GR1	18	—	—
Tornado GR4	2	—	1
Tornado F3	2	2	8
Hercules C-130K	—	—	1
BAe 146	1	—	—
Hawk	—	1	—
Jetstream Mk1	—	—	11
Tucano	—	—	1
Sea King HAS Mk6	2	—	1
Puma HC Mk1	—	—	1
Gazelle AH Mk1	4	8	5
Lynx HAS Mk3	—	1	1
Lynx HMA Mk8	1	—	—
Lynx AH Mk7	—	1	1
Merlin HMA Mk1	—	1	—
Single Squirrel (COMR)	—	—	1

Aircraft placed in storage

Aircraft type	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Harrier T10	—	1	—
Tornado GR4	—	8	—
Hawk	—	4	—
Jetstream Mk3	—	1	—
Tucano	2	2	9
Apache AH Mk1	16	11	—
Sea King HAS Mk6	2	6	—
Gazelle AH Mk1	2	8	11
Lynx HMA Mk8	—	1	1
Lynx AH Mk7	1	—	—
Lynx AH Mk 9	—	—	1
Merlin HMA Mk1	4	—	—

Army Board

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions the Army Board has requested that the Attorney General review specific military cases since 1997, in relation to cases in which all proceedings are complete. [23204]

Mr. Touhig: On one occasion since 1997.

AWE Aldermaston

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the recently announced additional £1 billion to be spent on maintenance of the Trident nuclear warhead at Aldermaston is *(a)* new money and *(b)* a first payment of the 25-year contract for £5.3 billion already allocated for this purpose to AWEML. [16497]

John Reid: The £1 billion to be spent at AWE, which I announced on 19 July this year, is in addition to the £5.3 billion which was announced in 2003 when the original contract was extended to 2025.

Central Asia

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* training programmes and *(b)* visits have been undertaken by UK military forces in (i) Uzbekistan, (ii) Tajikistan, (iii) Kyrgyzstan and (iv) Turkmenistan. [20975]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom has modest defence programmes with the nations of central Asia. Ministry of Defence engagement in the region began in 2001 and aims to support efforts to reform defence management and to raise professional standards in the armed forces. We also seek to encourage greater regional co-operation.

Training programmes in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are outlined as follows.

Uzbekistan—The MOD's directorate of standardisation held a seminar on NATO standards in June 2003, following advisory visits by the MOD directorate of management consultancy services in February and September 2003, a personnel management advisory team (PMAT) provided training in military human resource management in November 2003 and April 2004. A peacekeeping exercise, TIMUR EXPRESS, took place in September 2004, preceded by two planning visits. The UK contingent was a Territorial Army infantry company. The Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency ran a mapping course in October 2004. In November 2004, the junior staff officer course ran a partnership for peace seminar. Following a briefing by the commander of the British military advisory and training team (BMATT) on the training BMATT could provide, and reconnaissance visits, non-commission officer (NCO) training took place in October-November 2002, October-November 2003, June-July 2004, September 2004 and February-March 2005. Following the events in Andijan on 13 May, the UK withdrew from direct military co-operation with Uzbekistan.

Tajikistan—BMATT provided NCO training in May 2005. The joint arms control implementation group conducted arms control and counter-proliferation training in June 2005.

Kyrgyzstan—The joint doctrine and concepts centre conducted a seminar on peace support operations in Bishkek in May 2004. BMATT provided NCO training in October 2004. A PMAT ran a military human resources seminar in November 2004.

Turkmenistan—The UK has not undertaken any military training in Turkmenistan.

The following visits have taken place.

Uzbekistan—In June 2002,102 logistics brigade undertook a reconnaissance of Uzbek facilities that might be used in support of operations in Afghanistan. The Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency made a liaison visit in September 2003. The joint arms control implementation group conducted a Vienna document evaluation (confidence and security building measures) in January 2004.

The chief of the general staff visited Uzbekistan in May 2004 and staff from the joint services command and staff college visited the Uzbek Defence Academy in November 2004.

Tajikistan—The chief of the general staff visited Tajikistan in May 2004.

Kyrgyzstan—The Royal Marines, together with BMATT, have scoped the requirement for assistance to Kyrgyzstan with border security and undertook a reconnaissance visit in May 2003. The courses have yet to take place.

Turkmenistan—There have been no visits.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23475]

Mr. Touhig: The sum of £232,000, excluding VAT, was spent on works of art, as part of the Ministry of Defence Main Building Redevelopment programme during 2004–05.

Estate Disposals

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1212W, on estate disposals, what assessment has been made in relation to the

possible presence of *(a)* asbestos and *(b)* other toxic substances on each of the named sites; and if he will make a statement. [23631]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested will need to be obtained from a number of separate sources and will take a little time to collate. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Future Carrier Programme

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he first considered the possibility of co-operating with France in the future carrier programme; and what was the origin of this proposal. [23599]

Mr. Ingram: As both the UK and France are embarking on major, complex carrier procurement projects, it is natural that areas of mutual benefit and opportunities to deliver economies are being examined. This began in the summer of 2000.

Information Infrastructure Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what mechanisms have been put in place to monitor the performance of EDS in the Defence Information Infrastructure project; and what discussions have been held with *(a)* HM Revenue and Customs, *(b)* the Department for Work and Pensions and *(c)* the Passport Office on the company's performance on contracts undertaken for them. [23632]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) contract has a rigorous performance regime in place to manage the Delivery Partner (in which EDS is the Prime Contractor). The Delivery Partner's overall progress and performance will be monitored on a weekly basis against a range of Key Performance Indicators, and actual service delivery measured against targets and used as the basis for payment.

Prior to contract award, the MOD discussed the past performance of both Bidders with a range of Government Departments and other organisations, including the HM Revenue and Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions. In addition, Learning from Experience sessions and consultations were conducted with a wide range of organisations on best practice methods in the management of large IT contracts; this included the Passport Office.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many helicopters have been privately contracted for use by UK forces in Multinational Division South East, Iraq; what the cost is; and if he will make a statement. [23148]

John Reid: The MOD does not contract any private or civil helicopters for use in Iraq.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of armed forces personnel who have served in Iraq were *(a)* Welsh, *(b)* Scottish and *(c)* English. [19420]

Mr. Touhig: Information on the countries of birth of all the service personnel who have served in Iraq is not held centrally.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23375]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not collect this information. Literacy and numeracy training is provided to some personnel as part of wider training and educational programmes, such as apprenticeship schemes. In addition, the Department provides networks of tutors and advisers that can offer direct support or refer personnel to appropriate provision elsewhere, either internal or external. Significant Basic Skills training is directed rather than voluntary so the number requesting training would only give a partial picture in the context of the MOD's broader approach.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23780]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Logistics Vehicles

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many logistic vehicles are owned by his Department; and how many have additional armoured protection for the cabs and underside. [21076]

Mr. Ingram [*holding answer 25 October 2005*]: The Ministry of Defence owns 15,556 logistic vehicles ranging from four, eight and 14 ton trucks to the dismountable rack and off-load pick up system (DROPS). Of these, only those deployed on certain tasks within operational theatres would require additional protection. This protection is provided according to the nature of the tasks.

To date, a requirement for 146 sets of ballistic protection consisting of a mixture of armoured seat, ballistic side panels, ballistic floor covering and anti-shatter film for windows has been met for the operational fleet and a further 74 sets are on order.

Within the logistic fleet, only one vehicle, the close support wheeled tanker, has been designed to take bespoke fitted armoured protection. Currently six sets of underside and cab ballistic protection are fitted or are being fitted, and a further 17 sets are on order.

Nuclear Weapons

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to undertake studies to assess the levels of public *(a)* support for and *(b)* opposition

to the continued possession of nuclear weapons by the United Kingdom as long as other countries have them. [23737]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence periodically monitors public opinion on a range of defence issues, including attitudes towards the nuclear deterrent. This specific question was last asked in a poll conducted by MORI in December 2003, and the results are published in detail on the MOD website (www.mod.uk/linked_files/publications/foi/polls/mori.pdfwww.mod.uk).

Overall, some 66 per cent. agreed that the UK should retain nuclear weapons while other countries retain theirs, with 21 per cent. disagreeing.

We will continue to monitor public attitudes towards defence, although it is too early to say what specific questions might be asked in future.

Ordnance

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where *(a)* boxer caps, *(b)* initiators and *(c)* other manufactured components have been supplied from during the interruption of supply from Chorley Royal Ordnance. [24704]

Mr. Ingram: During the interruption of supply from BAE Systems Land Systems Chorley, 5.56 mm boxer caps have been sourced from Arm Tek (USA) and 7.62 mm boxer caps have been sourced from RUAG (Switzerland). Initiators have been supplied using existing stockpiles of material at Chorley. No other manufactured components have been supplied.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what tests and quality checks have been conducted on the new supplies of *(a)* initiators and *(b)* boxer caps; and when these tests were carried out. [24706]

Mr. Ingram: All types of initiators supplied to the MOD are subject to a validation and qualification programme agreed between the MOD and BAE Systems Land Systems.

Boxer caps manufactured by Arm Tek (USA) and RUAG (Switzerland) successfully completed qualification tests two months ago.

Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which series of vehicles will be replaced by the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle. [22352]

Mr. Ingram: The Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle will provide a total of 401 vehicles. They are planned to replace CVR(T) Spartan, Truck Utility Medium (Landrover), Saxon, FV432 and FV436 vehicles operating in command and liaison roles rather than the complete series of any vehicle.

Territorial Army

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* soldiers, *(b)* airmen, *(c)* seamen and *(d)* Territorial Army soldiers have left the armed forces within 12 months of deployment to Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [23064]

Mr. Touhig: Deployment data are not held centrally in databases of individual records and it is therefore not possible to provide a link to the Record of Service showing who has left the armed forces.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army personnel are deployed overseas, broken down by country; and how many are available for deployment. [23065]

Mr. Touhig: As at 28 October 2005, there are approximately 775 Territorial Army (TA) personnel deployed overseas; of this figure some 695 are in Iraq, 35 are in the Balkans and 45 are in Afghanistan. The latest figures available, dating from 1 September 2005, show some 12,000 members of the TA are available to be deployed.

The figure of 12,000 is reached by the exclusion of (among others) personnel who:

have not completed their mandatory training and/or are in the process of being discharged (approximately 11,500 personnel);

are currently mobilised and deployed and/those who would, if re-mobilised, exceed the statutory limits on mobilised service (section 54 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 limits mobilisation to a total of 12 months in every 36) (approximately 8,100 personnel); and

are members of the University Officer Training Corps (approximately 4,000 personnel).

Warships

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of the cost of the *(a)* Swan Hunter-built vessels and *(b)* BAE Systems-built vessels which form part of the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project. [20391]

Mr. Ingram *[pursuant to the reply, 2 November 2005, Official Report, c.1073W]:*

The current contract values for the costs associated with the build of the Swan Hunter vessels is £236 million and £176 million for the BAE Systems vessels. In addition the Swan Hunter contract includes £62 million for the provision of Lead Yard Equipment and Services in support of the construction of the two BAE Systems ships, and £11 million for initial spares provisioning for all four ships. Both companies have indicated likely cost increases to their programmes, and as these are subject to commercial discussions between the Ministry of Defence and the companies, I am unable to give further details at this time.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Websites

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 375W, on departmental websites, what the cost was of each website in the last year for which figures are available; and how many visits there were to each. [20872]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The cost and visit numbers for the two centrally managed websites is as follows:

odpm.gov.uk costs £228,000 per annum, with an average 433,541 visits per month

info4local.gov.uk costs £240,834 per annum, with an average 19,837 visits per month

The information on the other websites is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The previous answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 375W, on departmental websites should have included the following site: erdf.odpm.gov.uk (European Regional Development Fund)

Disabled Facilities Grant System

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding has been made available for the disabled facilities grant system *(a)* as a whole and *(b)* in each region in each year since 1997. [23547]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* Although the DFG is available in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is only responsible for the operation of the system in England. There is a different scheme in Scotland.

Government funding in support of local authorities in England for disabled facilities grant since 1997 has been (in £1,000) as follows:

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
England totals	56,000	59,000	64,849	71,800	84,800	88,000	101,157	103,300
Regional totals								
North-east	2,718	2,837	3,090	3,388	3,958	3,841	4,365	4,802
Yorkshire and The Humber	4,900	5,166	5,728	6,424	7,712	8,830	10,707	10,493
East Midlands	4,138	4,461	4,953	5,548	6,638	6,156	6,325	6,899
East of England	5,992	6,442	7,143	7,938	8,974	9,318	9,978	9,778
London	9,157	9,475	10,516	11,770	14,024	13,754	15,282	14,976
South-east	8,717	9,050	9,936	10,996	13,268	14,305	17,211	17,070
South-west	5,608	5,995	6,641	7,418	8,826	8,170	8,387	9,226
West Midlands	6,035	6,185	6,725	7,454	8,778	9,196	11,542	12,696
North-west	8,739	9,389	10,117	10,864	12,622	14,430	17,360	17,360

Fire Service

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what timetable he has set for the establishment of regional fire control rooms; and if he will make a statement. [21516]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The eight new control centres outside London are expected to be rolled out over 2008–09, with the first wave comprising the centres in the South-west, North-east and East Midlands. Provision has been made for London to join the project at the end of the rollout order, in time for the Olympic Games in 2012. A detailed timetable will be published after the technology/infrastructure services procurement is complete, which is expected to be in spring 2006.

High Hedges

Mary Creagh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what average fee is charged by local authorities to people seeking redress under the Government's new high hedges legislation. [23282]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* This information is not collected centrally. However, Hedgeline have published on their website some information on the fees being charged by local authorities for dealing with complaints under the high hedges legislation, and these appear to range from £0–£650.

Property (Cash Incentives)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether conditions can be placed on the geographical location of a property bought with the aid of financial assistance provided through a cash incentives scheme; [24261]

(2) what measures are in place to ensure that persons who receive financial assistance to buy a property through a cash incentives scheme are not subsequently provided with social housing; [24262]

(3) how many people have received financial assistance to buy a property in Basildon district through a cash incentives scheme, broken down by local authority of origin. [24263]

Yvette Cooper: Any local authority that chooses to introduce a cash incentive scheme may set conditions on it. These could include geographical conditions, although they would need to comply with wider legislation.

Awards of grant are made only for the purchase of houses or flats and only where the recipient is able to afford the cost of maintaining ownership. The issuing authority would require evidence of both before approving any award. However receipt of grant under a cash incentive scheme would not in itself exclude the recipient from being offered social housing should they apply for it at some later date.

Records of grants paid out under such schemes are kept by the issuing authorities; none is held centrally. I am not therefore able to provide any information regarding properties purchased with such grants in Basildon.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Equal Opportunities

Sarah Teather: To ask the honourable Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what equal opportunities strategy the House has in place. [24501]

Nick Harvey: The House of Commons Service's commitment to equal opportunities is set out at the beginning of the Staff Handbook:

"The House of Commons Service recognises and values the diversity of its staff and is committed to developing working practices which allow every member of staff to contribute his or her best, regardless of race, sex, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other irrelevant factor."

The handbook, which also contains detailed policies and procedures to underpin this policy, is available on the Parliamentary intranet.

A five-year diversity strategy and action plan is currently being prepared by the Diversity Forum, a House-wide group of staff which promotes diversity initiatives across the House service.

House Employees

Sarah Teather: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to the answer of 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 553W, on House employees, if he will break the figures down by pay bracket. [24509]

Nick Harvey: The figures broken down by pay bands are as follows:

Gender

Pay band/pay group	*Male*	*Female*
SCS	59	19
A	130	83
B	156	167
C	167	190
D	128	138
E	15	49
Craft	71	—
Catering	153	99
Casual	42	32
Total	921	777

Ethnicity

Pay band/ pay group	*White*	*Asian*	*Chinese*	*Black*	*Mixed*	*Other*
SCS	77	1	—	—	—	—
A	204	1	1	3	—	4
B	278	16	—	11	2	7
C	298	25	1	13	—	1
D	197	17	1	25	5	6
E	25	4	1	27	—	4
Craft	54	2	—	6	—	3
Catering	129	17	4	76	—	9
Casuals	61	8	—	5	—	—
Total	1,323	91	8	166	7	34

The overall totals for the two tables are different because *(a)* some staff have not responded to the ethnicity survey and *(b)* the ethnicity survey over a period of time includes some seconded-in staff or staff on career breaks not included in the gender breakdown.

Parliamentary Communications Directorate

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how long on average the Director of the Parliamentary Communications Directorate took to respond to telephone queries from hon. Members in the last period for which figures are available; and how many telephone queries are awaiting a response. [24469]

Nick Harvey: No records are held relating to this. There are no calls awaiting responses at present.

Serjeant at Arms Residence (Cleaning)

David Taylor: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what the expenditure on cleaning the Serjeant at Arms's official residence was in the last year for which figures are available. [24496]

Nick Harvey: Only window cleaning is carried out at the Serjeant at Arms's official residence as part of the contract to clean the 1 Parliament Street/Derby Gate block. The annual cost to the House is estimated to be in the region of £540 per year.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by her Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24468]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has not used any 0870 telephone numbers in the last five years.

Departmental Property (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24364]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport owns neither land nor property in Kettering.

Library Lending

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* videos, *(b)* DVDs and *(c)* CDs were lent by libraries in (i) Brent and (ii) London in each year since 1997. [24479]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally. However, the table shows the number of loans of sound recordings (encompassing music and talking books) and Videos and DVDs for Brent and for Greater London (including Brent) for the period 1997–98 to 2003–04.

	Brent		Greater London	
	Sound recordings	*Videos/ DVDs*	*Sound recordings*	*Videos/ DVDs*
1997–98	[1]36,001	106,900	[2]2,218,323	2,061,357
1998–99	38,587	116,720	4,376,961	2,218,239
1999–2000	50,862	108,685	4,228,280	2,267,107
2000–01	59,584	128,432	4,721,739	2,336,212
2001–02	55,590	145,155	4,562,316	2,447,554
2002–03	50,983	190,838	4,666,873	2,773,160
2003–04	50,934	174,273	4,085,128	2,740,266

[1] Music recordings only, no separate talking books figure for Brent for this year.
[2] Music recordings only for parity.

Source:
Public Library Statistics (Actuals) Published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

London Olympics

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 715W, on London Olympics, when the procurement strategy will be published. [21238]

Mr. Caborn: Following the publication of the Procurement Principles, which recognise the need to maximise the potential to improve the environment in East London and minimise adverse environmental impact of the Games and legacy development, the Olympic Delivery Authority plans to publish its draft procurement strategy in December.

Scottish Olympic Team

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received on a possible separate Scottish Olympic team. [24222]

Mr. Caborn: I have received one written parliamentary question tabled by the hon. Member on 28 October.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if her Department will support the creation of a Scottish Olympic team if it is clear that this is what Scottish people want. [24258]

Mr. Caborn: Recognition of National Olympic Committees is purely a matter for the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Under the current IOC charter, the IOC recognises the British Olympic Association as the Olympic Committee for the UK. Given Scotland's constitutional status in relation to the rest of the UK, it is highly unlikely that the IOC would consider a separate Scottish team.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with other countries on the risks of avian influenza. [19148]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have had discussions with ministerial counterparts on a regular basis since the H5N1 strain of the virus emerged in South East Asia four years ago. My officials attended a series of meetings in Brussels last week, organised by the European Commission, to discuss issues on avian influenza (AI).

The Commission convened two extraordinary meetings of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) to discuss the latest situation on avian influenza. The Standing Committee endorsed, unanimously, the reinforced safeguard measures proposed by the European Commission to reduce the risk of introducing avian influenza into the UK.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason the two parrot samples obtained from dead birds at the quarantine facility in Essex were referred to in her Department's press release 471/05 as pooled and not examined separately. [23893]

Mr. Bradshaw: Standard operating procedures in VLA laboratories permit the pooling of samples from birds in quarantine facilities.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is common practice for field officers from her Department to pool samples taken for the determination of H5N1 avian influenza virus. [23894]

Mr. Bradshaw: Determination of presence of H5N1 avian influenza virus is carried out by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. Officers of the VLA work to standard operating procedures which permit the pooling of samples from birds.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether breaches of quarantine rules have been observed by her officers at the quarantine facility in Essex referred to in her Department's press release 471/05. [23902]

Mr. Bradshaw: The extent to which quarantine requirements have been complied with is being investigated by the local authority who are responsible under the relevant legislation for any enforcement action that may be appropriate if the legal requirements have been breached.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether field tests are available for the detection of the H5N1 avian influenza virus in birds. [23905]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no commercially available field tests officially approved in the UK which are available for detection of H5N1 avian influenza in birds.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made on confirming the working hypothesis on the origin of the H5N1 virus recovered from bird samples taken at the quarantine facility in Essex. [23909]

Mr. Bradshaw: Work is still in hand to analyse the samples taken from birds which had died or been slaughtered in the quarantine facility in Essex. The virus

isolated so far has been placed in the same group as those which caused outbreaks of disease in ducks and geese in China in 2003.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has for isolating premises on which poultry infected with H5N1 avian influenza virus are identified. [23910]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Diseases of Poultry (England) Order 2003 outlines the restrictions that are put in place in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

If a poultry keeper suspects avian influenza, he must immediately notify the divisional veterinary manager and stop any movements on or off the premises which might spread disease.

The notification will be investigated by an Officer of the State Veterinary Service who will confirm those restrictions in writing. If disease is confirmed, the premises will be cleansed and disinfected before any poultry are allowed onto them again.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has issued on the minimum safe distance to be maintained between premises on which poultry infected by the H5N1 avian influenza virus are identified and premises where uninfected birds may continue to be kept. [23911]

Mr. Bradshaw: If a premises is infected with H5N1 avian influenza virus, all premises within the standard protection zone described in the Diseases of Poultry (England) Order 2003 will be surveyed by officers of the State Veterinary Service, regardless of their distance from the infected premises. Poultry in the infected premises will be culled.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has issued on the cleaning and disinfection measures that must be taken in poultry houses from which birds suffering from H5N1 avian influenza are removed. [23913]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department undertakes preliminary cleansing and disinfection on any premises where poultry are killed for disease control purposes. This is a spray down with an approved disinfectant to reduce airborne virus load. The occupier is responsible for secondary cleansing and disinfection which is to remove all trace of the virus and to avoid re-occurrence of disease when birds are re-introduced. The disinfection is carried out under the supervision of the department who must also be satisfied it has been effectively completed before allowing restocking to occur. Guidance on the responsibilities of the occupier is provided at the time of the cull and includes advice on suitable methods of cleansing, Health and Safety implications and minimising impact on the environment. This guidance is on the DEFRA website.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what arrangements have been made for the disposal of poultry carcases infected with H5N1 avian influenza virus. [23914]

Mr. Bradshaw: Disposal of carcases of birds infected with highly pathogenic avian influenza would be by off-site incineration or rendering in specialist plants. If existing incineration and rendering capacity were fully utilised, carcases would be disposed of by deep burial in suitably engineered commercial licensed landfills.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has received from the Taiwan Government on her Department's working hypothesis on the origins of the H5N1 avian influenza virus identified in a quarantine site in Essex. [23919]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have received representations from the Taiwan Government, both directly and through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Defra officials are meeting with representatives of the Taiwan Government on 3 November 2005 to discuss the working hypothesis on the origins of the H5N1 virus identified in the UK.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of seeking to develop a poultry vaccine for the current epidemic strains of H5N1. [23937]

Mr. Bradshaw: Several animal health companies have already developed and produced poultry vaccines which claim protection against the H5N1 strain.

There are no authorised vaccines in the UK for avian influenza H5N1 strain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether there is licensed drug or other treatment available for prophylactic on poultry to *(a)* reduce susceptibility to infection by H5N1 avian influenza virus and *(b)* reduce virus shed in the event of an infection episode. [23938]

Mr. Bradshaw: At present there are no such products, including vaccines, authorised in the UK either to protect against susceptibility to avian influenza H5N1 strain infection, or to reduce virus shedding in the event of infection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the typical period is between the receipt of a sample by the veterinary laboratory and the determination of a *(a)* negative and *(b)* positive result for the avian influenza virus H5N1. [23941]

Mr. Bradshaw: The typical period between the receipt of a sample by the veterinary laboratory and the determination of a negative result is seven days and a positive result is up to three days, in both cases in respect of avian influenza virus H5N1.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the capacity of competent laboratories to cope with demands that may arise from measures being taken to prevent H5N1 avian influenza. [23942]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) is an Executive agency of Defra. As the European Community and National Reference Laboratory for avian influenza, the VLA is playing a

major role in both the national and international surveillance for the H5N1 virus in wildlife and domestic poultry. The VLA has contingency plans to deal with outbreaks of avian influenza in a variety of different scenarios. These plans include measures to provide the necessary "surge capacity" which might be required in the event of a severe outbreak of disease.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many laboratories in England are capable of carrying out the full range of tests needed to identify the H5N1 avian influenza virus. [23943]

Mr. Bradshaw: Only one laboratory in England is authorised to carry out the full range of tests which lead to the official confirmation of the presence of avian influenza H5N1 virus. This is the Veterinary Laboratories Agency at Weybridge, Surrey, which is both the National Reference Laboratory and the EU Community Reference Laboratory for avian influenza virus.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the H5N1 isolates recovered from bird samples taken at the quarantine facility in Essex were tested for clade type. [23954]

Mr. Bradshaw: The avian influenza virus H5N1 recovered from the quarantine facility was subjected to analysis of the nucleotide sequencing of the haemagglutinin gene. This allowed the virus to be placed in a clade.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the epidemiological characteristics of different clades of influenza virus H5N1. [23959]

Mr. Bradshaw: Scientists working at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, which acts as the National Reference Laboratory and Community Reference Laboratory for avian influenza, have constructed a map which shows the phylogenetic relationship between different clade of avian influenza virus H5N1.

Information has also been received from the Office International des Epizooties (The World Animal Health Organisation) about the nature and key features of the disease in countries where birds or animals have been exposed to the virus.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the distribution of different clades of the avian influenza virus H5N1. [23960]

Mr. Bradshaw: Scientists at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, which acts as the National Reference Laboratory and Community Reference Laboratory for avian influenza, have constructed a chart which shows the phylogenetic relationship between the different clades of the avian influenza virus H5N1.

This chart includes the location at which the virus was first isolated.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what reasons underlay her Department's working hypothesis on the origin of the H5N1 virus recovered from bird samples taken at the quarantine facility in Essex. [23976]

Mr. Bradshaw: The isolate of avian influenza H5N1 was from pooled samples taken from two birds which had died at the quarantine facility in Essex. The virus was subject to initial identification and subsequent analysis of its nucleotide sequence of the haemagglutinin gene which showed that it fell within a distinct group of similar viruses isolated in China from ducks and poultry during 2003–05.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many clades have been identified in respect of avian influenza type H5N1 [23981]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 15 and 20 clades of H5N1 avian influenza virus have been identified since typing work began. The H5N1 viruses which have caused disease in poultry and humans since 2004 lie within a distinct sub-grouping formed by two clades.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the veterinary laboratory agency identifies the clade typing of H5N1 isolates recovered from samples submitted to it for testing for the virus. [23995]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is confirmed that the Veterinary Laboratories Agency carries out—as a matter of standard practice—analysis of the nucleotide sequence of the haemagglutinin gene which allows a judgment to be made about within which clade H5N1 virus isolates may be placed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the H5N1 avian influenza designation applies to a group of viruses with distinct epidemiological characteristics. [23997]

Mr. Bradshaw: The H5N1 virus is one of the A series of influenza viruses (the other series are B and C). The H5N1 avian influenza virus is categorised as a notifiable avian influenza virus (as are all AI viruses which are H5 or H7). The epidemiological characteristics of any H5 virus depend on to what degree they have become adapted to cause overt disease in the animal which they infect. The most recent outbreaks of H5N1 (particularly in Asia) have been categorised as being caused by a highly pathogenic strain (HPAI) of H5N1, causing high levels of mortality in domestic poultry.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what screening is being undertaken to identify the distribution types and prevalence of *(a)* avian influenza viruses and *(b)* their antibodies in commercial poultry flocks. [24007]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is an annual survey which aims to detect the prevalence of infections with avian influenza subtypes H5 and H7 in different species of poultry. Since 2003 this survey has taken place in all EC member states between September and January.

Poultry premises are selected at random and most meet certain eligibility criteria (including a greater risk of exposure to avian influenza viruses).

Samples are taken from six categories of poultry; turkey, domestic fowl, ducks, geese, quail and ratites (ostriches). These blood samples are tested for the presence of antibodies to avian influenza of subtypes H5 and H7.

If antibodies are found and the birds are still alive (some samples are taken at the point of slaughter) further samples are taken and subject to laboratory tests to identify and type any avian influenza viruses.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to increase the speed of operation of veterinary laboratories in testing samples for avian influenza virus H5N1. [24024]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are a number of distinct steps in the overall process in testing samples with a view to identifying whether avian influenza viruses of any type are present. These include growth on eggs, injection into a group of 4–8 week old chickens, and genetic sequencing techniques. This is a largely linear process, which limits the opportunities for decreasing the overall testing speed. Nevertheless, discussions have been held with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency to investigate possibilities for minimising any significant delays.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government has been able to establish whether the H5N1 strain of bird influenza which killed two parrots in UK quarantine came from Taiwan. [24060]

Mr. Bradshaw: The samples which were obtained from two birds in quarantine from which H5N1 virus was isolated were pooled tissue samples of certain organs taken from the two birds. It is not possible at present to confirm the exact origin of the virus, but clade typing has shown that the virus belongs to a sub-group of virus that caused disease in ducks and geese in China during 2003–05.

Bird Trade

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species-listed birds were traded into the UK in each year since 2000. [23808]

Jim Knight: The number of CITES-listed birds imported into the UK is given in the table.

	Number
2000	11,120
2001	32,228
2002	86,738
2003	88,375
2004	18,897

The number of birds so far recorded as imported in 2005 (to date) is 4,534.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received on the number of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species-listed birds traded into the EU *(a)* in 2000, *(b)* in 2001, *(c)* in 2002, *(d)* in 2003, *(e)* in 2004 and *(f)* to date in 2005. [23809]

Jim Knight: The numbers of CITES listed birds imported into the EU is given in the following table.

	Number
2000	1,787,244
2001	1,130,273
2002	835,613
2003	1,184,939
2004	694,382

The figures take account of all CITES-listed birds imported into the EU, including birds imported by countries which have become EU member states since 2000 (the figures also include those imported into the UK).

"To date" figures are not available for 2005.

Canals (Swindon)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of regeneration of waterways on surrounding areas and communities; and if she will make a statement on plans to restore Swindon's canals. [23206]

Jim Knight: Our policy paper on the inland waterways, "Waterways for Tomorrow" recognises the evidence produced by many reports and studies that the improvement, development and restoration of inland waterways acts as an effective catalyst for economic and social regeneration of both urban and rural areas. I understand that the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust is currently seeking funding for the restoration of the Wiltshire and Berkshire and the North Wiltshire Canals, both of which formerly passed through Swindon. The trust will wish to demonstrate the benefits that restoration of these canals will bring to Swindon and other places on their routes in terms of recreation, local amenity, tourism, and environmental enhancement.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on farmers and their land of the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [23134]

Jim Knight: It is too early to make an accurate assessment of the impact of the new right of access under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 but monitoring procedures have been put in place. The Countryside Agency will carry out an initial four-year monitoring programme measuring both the impacts and the outputs of the new right across a range of key areas.

One of the key areas of open access monitoring will look specifically at those who own and manage access land, through a land manager survey.

The survey will be carried out across a sample of land owners and managers across all mapping areas in order to track awareness and understanding of the CROW Act. Importantly, the survey will also address land owners' and managers' experience of the new right of access and will track both attitudes and perceptions of how the Act is working on the ground.

Our preliminary view is that measures, guidance and funding are in place to ensure that generally access will not have a significant impact on farmers.

Where land is subject to the new right, the CROW Act strikes a careful balance between delivering more and better access, and respecting other interests in the countryside. The new right is subject to restrictions to take account of legitimate interests, including the need to ensure effective management of land and livestock. Landowners and agricultural tenants have the discretion to exclude or restrict the new right for up to 28-days each year, for any reason. They may also apply for restrictions or closures where necessary for land management, safety or fire prevention purposes. In addition, we have established a national access management grant scheme to help local authorities, land managers and communities manage open access in their areas proactively. Funding is available for a rapid response service to help access authorities respond quickly—within 72 hours—to unforeseen on-site management issues raised by land managers.

Overall, we hope the new right of access will provide opportunities for land managers to diversify their farming practices to take advantage of new visitors and to promote their local produce to a new market.

Part II of the CROW Act makes a statutory obligation for local authorities to produce rights of way improvement plans. A key aspect of both developing and implementing the plans is to work with landowners and other partners to identify and agree new routes that will improve the network and provide opportunities for diversification of farming activities e.g. horse riding and recreational cycling. The majority of the other provisions in Part II of the Act are aimed at better delivery of existing goals for the rights of way network under current legislation and place few new burdens on farmers.

In respect of Part III of the Act concerning sites of special scientific interest, the regulatory impact assessment prepared at the time the Bill was introduced to Parliament considered the likely effects of the proposals on owners and occupiers of SSSIs, of which farmers are one group. No further assessment of the impact of the SSSI provisions in the Act has been made. However the entire SSSI regime as enhanced by the CROW Act provisions has been challenged and found to be compatible with the human rights of owners and occupiers of SSSIs by the court of first instance and the Court of Appeal.

We do not think any of the other provisions of the CROW Act will have a significant impact on farmers.

Dangerous Dogs Act

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to review the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. [23092]

Mr. Bradshaw: None.

Flood Protection

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Environment Agency and British Waterways on the inclusion of the Gloucester Sharpness Canal at Frampton-on-Severn as a flood-protection device; and where responsibility falls to compel British Waterways to undertake flood protection work. [22494]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood risk management in England and provides funding to the flood and coastal defence operating authorities, in this case the Environment Agency. The works programme to manage risk is driven by the operating authorities; Defra does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on what specific works to undertake.

Powers to undertake flood defence works are established in the Land Drainage Act 1991 and Water Resources Act 1991. These powers are permissive. Neither Act confers a responsibility on either Defra or the Agency to compel British Waterways to undertake flood protection work.

I understand that the embankment of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal protects the residents of Frampton-on-Severn against flooding from the Severn Estuary. The Environment Agency considers the condition of the embankment to be of a sufficient standard to provide the requisite protection. Maintenance will be required over time and the agency and British Waterways have agreed to work together to ensure this is done. As a last resort, the agency would have the legal powers to carry out necessary maintenance work itself to ensure continued protection against flooding from the estuary but it is highly unlikely these powers will be required.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what role the Environment Agency has in assessing the flood risk of planning applications. [24499]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency are responsible for providing planning authorities with advice on the environmental impacts, including flood risk, of new developments. In order to strengthen the influence of the Agency, the Government will shortly consult on revised guidance to planning authorities on how they should take account of current and future flood risk in making planning decisions. This will include a proposal that the EA become statutory consultees on certain categories of planning applications.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers the Environment Agency has to prevent development projects going ahead which could increase the risk of flooding to households. [24500]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency are responsible for providing planning authorities with advice on the environmental impacts, including flood risk, of new developments.

In order to strengthen the influence of the Agency, the Government will shortly consult on revised guidance to planning authorities on how they should take account of current and future flood risk in making planning decisions. Among other things this consultation exercise will propose that EA become statutory consultees for certain categories of planning applications, and that a power be established for the "call-in" of applications where EA have objected to a planning application on flood risk grounds and have been unable to resolve their objections with the planning authority.

Habitats Directive

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government are considering changes to the interpretation of the Habitats Directive. [18296]

Jim Knight: The Government are not considering any changes to the interpretation of the Habitats Directive. However, following ECJ Judgement C-6/04, my officials are considering whether it is necessary to clarify transposition of the Directive.

Horse Passports

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horse passports have been issued by each of the issuing bodies. [23804]

Jim Knight: The following table lists the most recent figures that English Passport Issuing Organisations (PIOs) have submitted to Defra. Defra collects Horse Passport Statistics only from English PIOs. Those organisations based in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland pass details of the number of passports issued to their respective Devolved Administrations.

Names of passport issuing organisations	*Passports issued*
American Miniature Horse Club	57
American Saddlebred Association of GB	406
American Quarter Horse Association—UK	1,492
A3Appaloosa Horse Club UK Ltd.	1,020
Anglo European Studbook	12,725
Arab Horse Society	21,743
British Appaloosa Society	1,150
British Association Purebred Spanish Horse Ltd.	894
British Camargue Horse Society	31
British Connemara Pony Society	3,257
British Driving Society	19,497
British Equestrian Federation	4,117
British Falabella Studbook	56
British Hanoverian Horse Society	1,125
British Harness Racing Club	710
British Horse Society	26,178
British Miniature Horse Society	1,470
British Morgan Horse Society	138
British Percheron Horse Society	1,334
British Show Jumping Association (BSJA)	5,345
British Skewbald and Piebald Association	3,602
British Spotted Pony Society	1,497
British Warm-Blood Society and British Sports Horse Registry	23,409
Caspian Breed Society UK	217
Caspian Horse Society	211
Cleveland Bay Horse Society	3,738
Coloured Horse and Pony Society (UK)	8,309
Dales Pony Society	1,574
Dartmoor Pony Society	6,219
Donkey Breed Society	12,000
EquiCours/Selle Francais	254
Exmoor Pony Society	1,863
Farmkey	17,973
Fell Pony Society	1,110
Friesian Horse Association of GB and Ireland Ltd.	0
Gypsy Cob Society	904
Hackney Horse Society	848
Haflinger Society	662
Horse Passport Agency	110,000
Horse Passports Ltd.	3,912
Hurlingham Polo Association	6,820
Icelandic Horse Society of GB	484
Irish Draught Horse Society GB	14,749
Lipizzaner Society of GB	154
Miniature Mediterranean Donkey Association of UK	366
National Pony Society	10,016
New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society	12,726
Pet ID UK Ltd.	60,735
Pleasure Horse Society	39,000
Shire Horse Society	2,810
Sport Horse Breeding of (GB)	21,178
Sports Pony Studbook Society	517
Spotted Horse and Pony Society	3,413
Spotted Pony Breed Society GB	906
Suffolk Horse Society	387
Trakehner Breeders Fraternity	1,200
United Saddlebred Association UK Ltd.	466
Weatherbys ID	49,949
Weatherbys Thoroughbred	132,675
Total	659,598

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department have a statutory base; which *(a)* publish their advice to Government, *(b)* publish an annual report and *(c)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20129]

Jim Knight: Not all the information required is held centrally and the following parts of this question have not been answered because of the disproportionate cost:

"*(a)* publish their advice to Government

(c) lay an annual report before Parliament;

and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case."

Some of part b can be answered, however there is currently no information held centrally on whether these bodies have a statutory base or whether it is a statutory requirement to publish an annual report.

Most of the information was collected in the last quarter of 2004 and relates only to a question about publishing annual reports on the internet.

(b) Publish an annual report

Advisory Committee on Consumer Products and the Environment

Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances

Advisory Committee on Organic Standards

Advisory Committee on Packaging

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment

Committee on Products and Processes for Use in Public Water Supply

Committee of Radioactive Waste Management

Darwin Advisory Committee

Farm Animal Welfare Council

Independent Scientific Group on TB in Cattle

Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council

Integrated Administration and Control System Appeals Panel

Pesticides Residues Committee

Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Council

Sustainable Development Commission

Veterinary Products Committee

Veterinary Residues Committee

Zoos Forum

Sustainable Development Commission

Veterinary Products Committee

Veterinary Residues Committee

Zoos Forum

Roads (Lancashire)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Environment Agency and *(b)* Lancashire county council on the environmental implications of the proposed Northern bypass. [24498]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA Ministers have not discussed this road with either the Environment Agency or Lancashire county council. I understand it is the subject of a major scheme proposal for funding from the Department for Transport. The Environment Agency and other statutory agencies have been asked to comment on it and on a number of other proposals by the Department for Transport.

Snared Animals

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions she has issued a licence for the snaring of *(a)* animals listed under section 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and *(b)* other animals in each of the last five years, broken down by species. [23179]

Jim Knight: The Department has not issued any licenses for snaring of any animal listed under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1 981 or any other animals in the last five years.

TRANSPORT

A2

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the A2. [24183]

Dr. Ladyman: Congestion on the A2, up to the junction with the A2018, where Transport for London takes responsibility, is monitored using a number of methods, such as traffic counts, individual surveys and cameras.

Specifically on the A2 and M2 route, the volume of traffic is measured continuously on an hourly basis at 71 sites. Quarterly and annual reports are produced to show traffic flows and average speed.

Following this assessment of congestion, the A2 is currently being improved between the M25 and the M2 to dual four lanes including reconstruction of the junction of the A2/M25. The last section of this work, between Pepperhill and Cobham, has recently been approved to go ahead. This scheme will greatly reduce existing congestion whilst providing improved access to the key regeneration area of Kent Thameside.

British Transport Police

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his written statement of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 27WS, on British Transport Police review, if he will include within the scope of his review an examination of the case for transferring the responsibilities and resources for policing transport in London to the Metropolitan Police. [22365]

Derek Twigg: The terms of reference for the Review of the British Transport Police (BTP) were placed in the House Library on 20 October. The aim of the review is to examine the functions of the BTP and whether some or all of these are best carried out by a national force, regional forces or, indeed, by the industry itself.

The review is being conducted in parallel with the review of the 43 local police forces being undertaken by the Home Secretary who has invited forces to come forward with firm proposals for the creation of strategic forces in each region by December 2005.

The BTP review will take into account the emerging outcomes of the Home Secretary's review and consider whether other forces, including the Metropolitan Police, would be best placed to carry out any railway policing functions.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23295]

Ms Buck: The Department and its agencies ran a total of five call centres in the years 2003–04 to date. Detailed information is as follows:

DSA

The DSA has two call centres. Detailed information for the number of calls is as follows.

Theory test booking centre

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 (to date)
(i) Calls handled by an adviser (Number)	1,654,170	1,807,074	747,118
Percentage of total calls	91	87	98
(ii) Calls received but abandoned (Number)	51,233	219,758	16,227
Percentage of total calls	3	11	2
(iii) Calls that received an engaged tone (Number)	108,856	41,716	0
Percentage of total calls	6	2	—

Practical test booking centre

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 (to date)
(i) Calls handled by an adviser (Number)	5,031,011	4,551,441	2,220,054
Percentage of total calls	99.8	72	67.6
(ii) Calls received but abandoned (Number)	10,056	14,423	9,771
Percentage of total calls	0.2	0.3	0.3
(iii) Calls that received an engaged tone (Number)	Not available	Not available	262,036
Percentage of total calls	Not available	Not available	8
Calls handled by ASR[1]	Not available	1,723,654	791,035
Percentage of total calls	Not available	27.7	24.1

[1] In June 2004 an Advanced Speech Recognition (ASR) System was introduced which allows callers to transact without the need to speak with an adviser.

Note:

The number of abandoned calls is calculated only if the caller abandons the call after 20 seconds. Any calls abandoned before this do not count as it is one of DSA's service targets to answer calls within 20 seconds.

DVLA

The information for the DVLA Call Centre, Swansea, is as follows:

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 (to end September)
(i) Calls handled by an adviser (Number)	9,000,998	8,792,497	4,954,986
Percentage of total calls	64.35	55.91	46.45
(ii) Calls received but abandoned (Number)	109,901	71,974	77,777
Percentage of total calls	0.78	0.45	0.72
(iii) Calls that received an engaged tone (Number)	Not available	501,338	1,308,696
Percentage of total calls	Not available	4.38	11.49

Notes:

1. The BT statistics needed to report on the proportion of calls that received an engaged tone are only available from August 2004.
2. The 2005–06 (to end of September) figures reflect very high demand in June and July as a consequence of a publicity campaign.

Highways Agency

The Highways Agency has a single call centre. The number of calls received in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to date is as follows:

	Number of calls
2003–04	65,687
2004–05	75,079
2005–06 (To date)	38,000

The current telephone system used by the Highways Agency information Line does not have the functionality to run automatic reports giving amount of calls (i) received but abandoned, and (ii) received an engaged tone.

A replacement telephone system, due to be installed January/February 2006, will provide enhanced reporting on call waiting times, abandoned calls and performance of advisers.

VOSA

The Vehicle and Operator Service Agency (VOSA) has one call centre. The numbers of calls for 2003–04 to the end of September 2005 are as follows:

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06 (to end September)
Calls received by VOSA Enquiry Unit (Number)	281,419	466,834	274,080
(i) Calls handled by an adviser (Number)	269,049	424,740	220,992
Percentage of total calls	97	91	81
(ii) Calls received but abandoned (statistics only available from September 2003) (Number)	12,370	42,094	53,096
Percentage of total calls	4.5	9	19
(iii) Calls that received an engaged tone	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured

Note:

The high level of abandoned calls in 2005–06 was related to a sudden increase in volume following the implementation of the "E' test booking system in September 2005.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the total quantity of carbon dioxide released by *(a)* overground and *(b)* underground trains in (i) 1984, (ii) 1994 and (ii) 2004. [23370]

Derek Twigg: The table provides estimates of all carbon dioxide emissions from the rail sector for 1984, 1994 and 2003. Figures for 2004 are not yet available. It is not possible to disaggregate these data to provide separate estimates of overground and underground train emissions.

The estimates include direct carbon dioxide emissions from diesel trains and indirect emissions from all other sources and operations connected with the rail sector. Indirect emissions include emissions from the production of electricity allocated to the heavy and light rail sectors including London Underground and non-traction use of electricity for rail lighting, signalling, stations and offices.

	Total direct and indirect CO_2 emissions from rail activity (million tonnes of CO_2)
1984	5.2
1994	6.5
2003	5.3

Source:

DEFRA

Channel Tunnel

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the proposed safety dossier for Europorte 2 supporting Eurotunnel's safety case has been found satisfactory by the channel tunnel safety authority. [24086]

Derek Twigg: I understand that the channel tunnel safety authority has completed its examination of the Europorte 2 safety dossier and has written to the channel tunnel intergovernmental commission advising the terms on which the commission should accept that dossier.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects Eurotunnel to re-submit information on site and work plans supplementary to documents submitted in April 2004 by Eurotunnel to the intergovernmental commission regarding the procedure for the review of plans and submissions by Union Railways (South) Limited and arrangements for commissioning of the channel tunnel rail link interfaces with Eurotunnel. [24087]

Derek Twigg: The channel tunnel safety authority (CTSA) advised the intergovernmental commission on 24 May 2004 that the information provided by Eurotunnel regarding the commissioning of the channel tunnel rail link interface with Eurotunnel was satisfactory. However, the intergovernmental commission requested some supplementary detail for its records. Most of this has been provided. It is expected that the outstanding information—which is not held by Eurotunnel—will be provided shortly.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of whether safety requirements on heavy goods vehicle shuttles are still met under proposals by Eurotunnel to reduce by one the minimum crew in the amenity coach. [24088]

Derek Twigg: These proposals have been reviewed on behalf of the two Governments by the channel tunnel safety authority, which considered the proposals acceptable, subject to a number of conditions being met relating to the training of staff and the evacuation procedures in an emergency.

Congestion Charge (Disabled Drivers)

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to exempt disabled drivers from congestion charging. [22174]

Ms Buck: Local authority congestion charging schemes may make provision for exemptions for disabled drivers. The Government will consider with interested parties the need for nationally defined exemptions.

Correspondence

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from *(a)* the general public and *(b)* hon. Members. [24769]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport and its agencies make every effort to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently and have targets of between 10 and 20 working days for replying to letters from members of the public. I would also refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 502–03W in response to his question about dealing with hon. Members correspondence.

Crossrail

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of Crossrail on the aggregate depots in West London; and what estimate he has made of transfers of aggregates from rail to road. [23155]

Derek Twigg: It is expected that there will be no permanent loss of capability of aggregate depots as a result of Crossrail. During Crossrail construction, depot capability is expected to be maintained in all but one case. Overall the impact on aggregate depots is not expected to cause a transfer from rail to road.

Heathrow (Platform Facilities)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the capacity of platform facilities at Heathrow airport to accommodate both Crossrail and Airtrack services. [23154]

Derek Twigg: On Second Reading of the Crossrail Bill, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport described the ongoing discussions between the Government and BAA about access to Heathrow for Crossrail. The current intention is that Crossrail will serve terminals 1–4 and will therefore not affect the development of services to terminal 5 such as the Airtrack scheme. We will continue to discuss these matters with BAA as the Airtrack proposals progress.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23366]

Ms Buck: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency has run an in-house literacy course since February 2005. The costs for that were £620 in total and £124 per head. The Department has not delivered any other in-house training on literacy and numeracy.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23398]

Ms Buck: Five staff have requested and attended an in-house literacy course run by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency during 2005, none have requested numeracy courses. During 2002, 2003 and 2004 no staff requested such training, nor have there been any requests from other areas of the Department during 2005.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of his Department. [23441]

Ms Buck: The Department encourages its staff to improve their skills, as part of that the central Department's intranet has a page which provides individuals with information on the national tests, assessment centres and some literacy and numeracy courses.

Railways

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will order a full investigation into the reliability of the service of the Great Western franchise in advance of re-tendering being completed, with specific reference to the performance of *(a)* First Great Western and *(b)* Network Rail. [24400]

Derek Twigg: I have already met First Great Western (FGW) and Network Rail to assess performance. Joint action plans are in place between Network Rail and FGW to address performance trends and these are monitored monthly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement of the health and safety implications of recent rail incidents. [22250]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive's HM Railway Inspectorate has responsibility for enforcing the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 on Britain's railways. The Rail Accident Investigation Branch, which became operational on 17 October, conducts "no blame" investigations into accidents and makes recommendations to prevent similar accidents in the future.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the reliability of the rail service between *(a)* Paddington and Reading, *(b)* Paddington and Swindon, *(c)* Paddington and Gloucester and *(d)* Paddington and Cheltenham; and how many delays have occurred on each route in the last 12 months due to (i) planned and (ii) unplanned maintenance; and if he will make a statement. [23986]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not keep records on the number of delays due to planned or unplanned maintenance. However, I recently met First Great Western and Network Rail to discuss performance, and I understand that joint action plans are in place between Network Rail and First Great Western (FGW) to address performance trends. These are monitored monthly.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans there are to upgrade infrastructure along the Hastings to London Victoria line; and if he will make a statement; [24624]

(2) what plans there are to upgrade the infrastructure at Bexhill-on-Sea train station; and how much funding it has received in each year since 1997; [24626]

(3) what plans there are to upgrade the infrastructure at *(a)* Crowhurst, *(b)* Battle, *(c)* Robertsbridge and *(d)* Etchingham train stations in East Sussex; and if he will make a statement. [24627]

Derek Twigg: Investment at individual stations is a matter for Network Rail. However, the London to Hastings routes have benefited from significant investment through the Southern Region new trains programme and the associated power upgrade. This has seen the elimination of the slam door trains previously used on this part of the network and their replacement by modern, air conditioned trains on all services.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will encourage train operating companies to undertake public consultations for rail users affected by train timetabling changes on the Hastings to London Victoria and Hastings to Charing Cross lines. [24628]

Derek Twigg: Under the terms of each franchise agreement train operating companies are required to consult on significant changes with all relevant local authorities and either the Rail Passengers Council or London TravelWatch.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what level of service will be specified in the new contract for the Great Western franchise between *(a)* Herefordshire and *(b)* Worcestershire and London Paddington; and what rolling stock will be used to provide this service. [22105]

Derek Twigg: Herefordshire and Worcestershire will retain at least the same level of service as they have today. The current proposal for the new contract is to enhance the service with two additional round trips to the Cotswolds.

The rolling stock for these services will be specified by the bidders for the franchise.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost to public funds of support to the railway industry was in the last year for which figures are available. [22833]

Derek Twigg: £4,688 million of public funds were spent on rail in 2003–04. A detailed breakdown of that spend is set out in table 4d of the Department's annual report which was published on 20 June 2005.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the total kilometres travelled by passengers on the railways in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1994 and *(c)* 2004. [23355]

Derek Twigg: The total kilometres travelled by passengers on the railways in Great Britain were: *(a)* 35 billion in 1984; *(b)* 35 billion in 1994; and *(c)* 51 billion in 2004.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether plans have been agreed to update Thameslink St. Pancras station with pedestrian links to the new Eurostar terminal; and whether finance has been made available. [24212]

Derek Twigg: The timing and funding arrangements for the fit-out of Thameslink St. Pancras station are currently under consideration. Once the station is operational there will be direct pedestrian access to it from within the new Eurostar terminal via stairs, escalators and lifts.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many qualified train drivers there are. [23127]

Derek Twigg: As at 17 September 2005 there were 10,993 operational franchised train operating company passenger train drivers.

Road Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance his Department issues to local authorities on road traffic calming measures. [24976]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department's "Traffic Calming Bibliography", Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/05 published in January this year, lists the main items of published advice and research into the design, use and effectiveness of traffic calming measures. Copies of this leaflet have been placed in the House Library.

In addition, a Local Transport Note on traffic calming is being drafted. This will summarise existing information on the design and effectiveness of traffic calming measures. The Department plans to publish this Local Transport Note early next year.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to record the nationality of all drivers involved in road traffic accidents in England. [24165]

Dr. Ladyman: Information about personal injury road accidents in Great Britain is collected by the police. There are no plans to establish the nationality of every driver involved. However, from 1 January 2005, the information collected about each vehicle involved in such an accident includes whether it is a foreign registered vehicle, and whether it is left or right hand drive. Results will become available in the summer of 2006.

School Crossing Patrols

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of levels of pay for school crossing patrols on recruitment. [24368]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities are responsible for the provision and recruitment of school crossing patrols (SCPs).

National pay scales exist for SCPs: most authorities pay NJC (National Joint Council) Scale, Spinal Column Point 5 (pro-rata)—equivalent to £7.1311 per hour.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was raised in fines as a result of detection by *(a)* mobile and *(b)* fixed speed cameras in each year for which figures are available. [23883]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department's information on fines following offences detected by safety cameras relates to the totals for safety camera partnerships, and not to camera types. The following table shows income available for netting-off in England and Wales for each year for which figures are available since the inception of the programme.

	Fine revenue (£)
2000–01	9,871,920
2001–02	18,799,820
2002–03	73,876,260
2003–04	113,567,780

Traffic Commissioners

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review the rule that the traffic commissioners do not accept representations made on behalf of constituents by elected representatives. [24406]

Dr. Ladyman: I have no plans to review the categories of persons who may object to, or make representations against, the issue of a goods vehicle operator's licence by a traffic commissioner. These persons include county, district and unitary authorities and individuals who own or occupy land in the vicinity of a proposed operating centre for goods vehicles. The existing arrangements provide adequate opportunity for persons who may be affected by the issuing of a licence to have their views considered.

Traffic Lights

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued to local authorities on the timing of the pedestrian phase of traffic lights; what monitoring takes place to ensure that such guidance is adhered to; and if he will take action to prevent the length of the pedestrian phase of traffic light sequences being set so high as to cause unnecessary traffic congestion. [23353]

Ms Buck: The Department has issued guidance in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/05, Pedestrian Facilities at Signal-Controlled Junctions. I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Tackling congestion through effective management of a local authority's road network is a statutory duty under Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Within this context, authorities are responsible for determining traffic light timings, taking account of local traffic conditions. Traffic light timings are not monitored centrally.

WALES

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's skills development plan. [23858]

(2) which individual in responsible for developing and implementing his Department's skills development plan. [23916]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office has fewer than 500 staff and is not required to produce a skills development plan.

Skills needs are assessed as part of each member of staff's personal development plan against the requirements of their post and their wider development needs.

Health Services

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 252W on health services, whether he discusses the delivery of health services in Wales in Cabinet as the voice of Wales. [24970]

Mr. Hain: Yes, when the health service is an agenda item and even when it is not; I may also on occasions have discussions with the Secretary for Health, if there is a specific issue I need to raise with her. Two examples being the NHS Redress Bill and the Health Bill, both of which include powers for Wales.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21125]

Mr. Hain: Skills needs are assessed as part of each member of staffs personal development plan against the requirements of their post and their wider development needs.

If a requirement for training in literacy or numeracy were identified, training would be offered internally, on the job or through an external organisation as appropriate.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23360]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office has not sent any staff on specific literacy or numeracy training courses, so has incurred no direct costs.

However, it does encourage staff to attend training courses and on-the-job training relevant to their posts and identified in their performance development plans. Such training can include elements of literacy and numeracy training but it is not possible to quantify this directly.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23399]

Nick Ainger: No Wales Office staff have requested specific training in either literacy or numeracy since 2002.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy amongst employees in his Department. [23443]

Nick Ainger: The Wales Office is a small Department which recruits most of its staff from other Government Departments and the National Assembly for Wales. Literacy and numeracy are tested as appropriate during the recruitment process.

Individual staff training requirements are assessed as part of the performance management process. If national tests in literacy or numeracy were identified for staff members, they would be encouraged to sit the tests.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of new recruits to his Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23766]

Nick Ainger: Most staff recruited to the Wales Office are existing civil servants and as such have already had their basic skills assessed.

The Wales Office does not collect information on staff qualifications. Recruitment to the Wales Office is based on competence and hence there may not be a specific requirement for staff to have particular qualifications.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23797]

Nick Ainger: Most staff recruited to the Wales Office are existing civil servants and as such have already had their basic skills assessed.

During recruitment to the Wales Office, literacy is tested through the completion of the application form and performance at interview. Numeracy skills are not usually tested separately.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Angola

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made on the holding of a donor conference to assist reconstruction in Angola. [22017]

Hilary Benn: The international community has consistently maintained that, in order for a donor conference to be successful, Angola would first need a poverty reduction strategy (PRS) and a formal programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While a PRS has been in place since January 2003, an IMF programme has not yet been agreed.

As three and a half years have passed since the end of the civil war, a traditional pledging conference for Angola's reconstruction needs may no longer be appropriate. Recent statements from the Angolan Government suggest a partners' conference as a possible way forward. We are considering this.

Asian Earthquake

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many helicopters the Government *(a)* has sent and *(b)* intends to send to areas affected by the earthquake in Asia. [22064]

Mr. Thomas: At the request of DFID, the RAF has provided three CH-47 Chinook Helicopters which have been operational since 28 October. This is in addition to the four helicopters DFID is funding through the United Nations and Red Cross Movement.

At the end of last week, the UN estimated there were a total of 81 helicopters in operation and another 44 due to arrive in the area, but the number of helicopters flying on any one day can vary with weather conditions and maintenance.

Bangladesh

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the Char livelihood project in Bangladesh. [22014]

Mr. Thomas: DFID Bangladesh regularly assesses the Char livelihood project, which included four field visits over the past six months. The head of DFID Bangladesh and the British high commissioner visited just over a week ago.

After a slow start up phase, in the four months leading up to the monsoon season starting in June:

581 Homes were raised as part of the flood protection programme, benefiting 2,389 people directly and 3,835 indirectly.

The community benefited from the income generated by the creation of 44,663 days of paid employment.

This financial year DFID Bangladesh estimates that £2.5 million will be invested directly into activities to enhance the livelihoods of the poor of the Char area.

DFID Bangladesh will continue to closely assess the project to ensure that momentum is maintained and, the rate of implementation increases. DFID Bangladesh plans an independent review of progress early in 2006.

Cayman Islands

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the UK's *(a)* technical and *(b)* financial assistance to the Cayman Islands in each year since 1999. [22553]

Mr. Thomas: The UK's direct support for the Cayman Islands is set out in the table. In addition, the Cayman Islands also benefit from regional initiatives, its share of which cannot be specifically attributed.

£000

	Technical	*Financial*
1999–2000[1]	49	—
2000–01	137	—
2001–02	222	—
2002–03	61	—
2003–04	34	—
2004–05	41	[2]200

[1] DFID expenditure. FCO figures not available for this year.

[2] Emergency assistance following Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. Precise figure is not available as expenditure is attributed to wider Hurricane Ivan assistance which also included Grenada, Jamaica and Cuba.

Chronic Poverty

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what work his Department is doing on social transfers and chronic poverty. [23019]

Hilary Benn: DFID recognises that social transfers could have an important role to play in reducing chronic poverty in very poor countries. DFID has recently published a paper entitled: "Social transfers and chronic poverty: emerging evidence and the challenge ahead." The paper describes how social transfers have helped tackle poverty in many better off developing countries and suggests that they may have a similar impact in very poor countries. It recognises that there are significant challenges to implementing social transfer programmes in countries with weak institutional capacity but suggests that these are not insurmountable.

DFID is working with a number of governments in very poor countries to develop a better understanding of the potential role that social transfers could play in tackling chronic poverty. A number of specific social transfer programmes are already under design or are being implemented. DFID has committed £70 million over three years to support a safety net programme for five million chronically poor people in Ethiopia that provides both work programmes and social transfers. We are also supporting social transfer pilot programmes in Zambia and Kenya and our Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction programme in Bangladesh provides social transfers to very poor women.

DFID is committed to continuing to collect evidence on the effectiveness of social transfers. For example, the department will provide further funding of up to £7.5 million over five years to the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), a research consortium with members in the UK, Africa and South Asia. A key element of CPRC's work will be to examine further how social protection, including social transfers, can help tackle chronic poverty.

Chronic poverty, of course, needs to be tackled by a range of policy responses, not just social transfers. For example, DFID is working to strengthen health and education services for the chronically poor, as well as increasing their opportunities to participate in economic growth and be more included within national political processes.

Commission for Africa

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what follow-up there has been to the Commission for Africa; and which recommendations have been implemented. [22597]

Hilary Benn: Many of the Commission for Africa's recommendations have been picked up in the commitments made by the G8 at Gleneagles and by the UN at the Millennium Review Summit. The UK Government have regular meetings at ministerial level to monitor implementation. At the international level, the Africa Partnership Forum will be tracking delivery on the basis of a Joint Action Plan now being prepared, which will bring together the commitments of Africa and its development partners for the first time.

Important progress has already been made on many of the Commission's recommendations. For example:

G8 and EU countries have made commitments that will result in an additional US$25 billion in aid for Africa by 2010. 15 EU member states have set at deadline of 2015 to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent. of national income provided as aid. The US$4 billion International Financing Facility for Immunisation was launched in September, with support from the UK, France, Sweden and Italy, which could save five million lives by 2015.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank's shareholders have agreed to provide 100 per cent. debt cancellation for eligible Highly Indebted Poor Countries, worth US$55 billion and Nigeria the single largest debt cancellation for an African country (worth US$30 billion).

Specific targets and a monitoring process have been agreed to improve the effectiveness of aid on the basis of the Paris Declaration.

The UN has agreed the principle of Responsibility to Protect, along with the establishment of the Peace Building Commission and the Human Rights Council. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund has been strengtheped to enable funding to be targeted to the places in most need; six countries including the UK have committed US$150 million between them.

African Ministers have agreed a five-year Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology; we are now discussing funding options.

US$3.7 billion has been pledged for the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for 2006–07. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AID (UNAIDS) has started work on a plan to deliver on the G8 and UN commitment to as close as possible, to universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010. The Commission for Africa recommended further investment in health related research, and the UK recently announced funding of £2 million a year over the next five years, for research into anti-malarial drugs via the Medicines for Malaria Venture.

The Infrastructure Consortium for Africa has been launched (on 6 October) to overcome obstacles in the sector and to help identify finance for programmes identified as priorities by Africa.

On trade, there has been increased international support for the aid for trade initiative endorsed at Gleneagles, including commitments by the EU to increase their support for trade related capacity building. We continue to press for further progress with this and other trade-related areas in the run up to Hong Kong.

Departmental Consultation

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list formal consultations being sponsored by his Department and its agencies; and what the *(a)* commencement date and *(b)* deadline for responses is in each case. [22571]

Hilary Benn: DFID is currently carrying out the following formal consultations:

Draft plans for support to China by the UK's Department for International Development

Commencement date: August 2005.

Deadlines for responses: 31 October 2005.

UK consultation on advance market commitments for vaccines

Commencement date: October 2005.

Deadlines for responses: 30 December 2005.

Departmental Energy Policy

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22455]

Mr. Thomas: The energy consumption/costs for the DFID UK estate over the last five years have been as follows:

	Consumption (kWh)	*Cost (£)*
2000–01	[1]8,310,124	[1]272,878
2001–02	[1]8,310,124	[1]272,878
2002–03	8,310,124	272,818
2003–04	11,136,145	347,567
2004–05	10,948,525	388,723

[1] DFID has a baseline year of 2002–03 as the London office moved to a completely new refurbished building at the end of 2001 and work began to refurbish the East Kilbride office. Data prior to 2002 is incomparable to current data. The increase in consumption in 2003–04 is due to the East Kilbride refurbishment.

The recent refurbishments of our UK offices have given us the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings; for instance, DFID has installed Building Management Systems that allow us to monitor and manage energy usage to a much greater extent than in the past.

DFID has also installed energy efficient heating systems and also lighting systems which are movement sensitive and take account of natural lighting levels. An Environment Management System has been implemented at both UK offices. The design for the refurbishment of our East Kilbride office has received an "excellent" and the London office a "very good" rating under the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM).

. Information on energy costs at our overseas offices is not centrally available and could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost. Through our green awareness programme we are encouraging overseas offices to consider the implementation of similar energy efficiency measures wherever possible.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23719]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is committed to meeting the Energy White paper target for central Government estates of reducing absolute carbon from fuel and energy efficiency used in buildings in their estate by 12.5 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000.

The recent refurbishments of our UK offices has given us the opportunity to improve significantly the energy efficiency of our buildings. For instance, DFID has installed Building Management Systems which allow us to monitor and manage energy usage to a much greater extent than in the past. DFID has also installed energy efficient heating systems and also lighting systems that are movement sensitive and take account of natural lighting levels. An Environment Management System (EMS) has been implemented at both main UK offices and we are currently looking at the feasibility of a wind turbine and a combined heat and power plant at

the East Kilbride office. The design for refurbishing the East Kilbride office earned an "Excellent" and the London office a "very good" BREEAM rating (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology).

DFID actively encourages car sharing schemes and we publish bus/train timetables on our internal website as well as links to external public transport sites. DFID is also part of a carbon offsetting project with three major airlines where air miles are exchanged for earth miles which contribute to carbon offset projects designed to neutralise harmful emissions from air travel. DFID welcomes any support and advice on managing carbon emissions so we will be giving serious consideration to joining up to the Carbon Trust Carbon Management Programme.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21298]

Hilary Benn: Progress was reported in the Budget 2005 and in the 2005 departmental report. Further progress will be reported in the forthcoming 2005 autumn performance report and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21316]

Hilary Benn: As the Secretary of State, I am responsible for the overall delivery of the Department's efficiency programme.

Governance

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how frequently the Department formally reviews levels of good governance, transparency and corruption in the countries in which it works. [21955]

Mr. Thomas: Governance features in the assessments of aid partnerships at a frequency agreed with the partner. Normally this occurs every three to five years, with plans monitored annually.

A Fiduciary Risk Assessment is mandatory for all Poverty Reduction Budget Support programmes. It is normally updated every three years. In the interim, annual statements of progress are produced.

Where there has been a major change in circumstances, and or there is an overall negative trend in public financial management performance, the Fiduciary Risk Assessment is updated on an annual basis.

Healthcare Professionals Recruitment

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what representations he has received from *(a)* healthcare recruitment agencies, *(b)* developing countries and *(c)* representatives of health workers on the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals; [24235]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals. [24236]

Mr. Thomas: DFID and the Department of Health (DoH) officials are working closely together on ethical international recruitment practices of health care workers which includes DFID's participation in the Department of Health's International Recruitment Board. DFID was pleased to contribute to the revision of the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals last year and welcomed the strengthening of the code particularly in relation to the inclusion of the private sector.

During my recent trip to Zambia and Malawi with the Minister of State for the DoH, my hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster, Central (Ms Winterton), we discussed health worker shortages and international recruitment practices with local officials and health workers. We recognised that while the code has had some impact, there is consensus that it can not address the root causes of worker shortages. A number of DFID country offices are working with developing country governments to address their health worker shortages based on locally recommended solutions to build stronger health systems and services. This includes increasing national training capacity while simultaneously making improvements to working terms and conditions which directly affect recruitment, retention and performance of existing workers.

Outside of my visits to Zambia and Malawi, I have not received formal representations from the other groups mentioned in the hon. Member's question. The DoH officials, along with national health service (NHS) employers are taking an active lead in the implementation and monitoring of the code and representations related to the code that have been directly addressed to the them.

HIV (Africa)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to tackle mother to child HIV infection in Africa; and if he will make a statement. [23671]

Hilary Benn: The UK is committed to spending £1.5 billion on HIV and AIDS globally over the next three years. DFID's approach to tackling mother to child HIV infection (MTCT) in pregnancy, labour and delivery in Africa is primarily through strengthening comprehensive national HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care services. This includes improving national health services and specific action to reduce MTCT such as voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) targeted at women, replacement feeding where feasible and anti retroviral therapy (ART) including the use of Nevirapine.

The UK also provides funding to African countries via the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). This includes significant resources for HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care including interventions to prevent MTCT.

DFID also provides core funding to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and recognises its role as a global technical agency which provides guidelines on treatment for HIV positive mothers.

House Building (Planar Technology)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will assess the merits of using planar technology in house building for developing countries. [22686]

Hilary Benn: DFID's approach to shelter and housing is not to specify particular technologies, but to support demand driven programmes which focus on enabling communities to develop their own solutions to local challenges, as in the case of our support to the Community Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF). DFID funds a major programme of social and scientific research that enables effective solutions involving the full range of appropriate technologies. Details of our research can be found on DFID's website http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/.

Hurricane Damage

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance has been provided to *(a)* the Mexican Government and *(b)* the Caribbean islands to counter hurricane damage. [22670]

Mr. Thomas: Both Mexico and the Caribbean countries affected by recent tropical storms and hurricanes have shown sufficient national capacity to respond without international assistance. Therefore there have been no requests for international assistance.

Throughout the hurricane season, the DFID Caribbean office has been strengthened to enhance monitoring of tropical storm development, preparedness and the potential for assessment and response action. DFID also has relief supplies (1,800 collapsible five litres jerry cans and 1,500 tarpaulins) on one of the UK frigates based in the Caribbean.

Iraq

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the rebuilding of Iraq. [22970]

Hilary Benn: Progress has been made on reconstruction in Iraq in spite of all the challenges. After decades of damage by a repressive regime it will take time to build Iraqi institutions, improve infrastructure and services for the long term, and for the private sector to flourish. Continued violence and sabotage have also inevitably hampered the reconstruction effort. However, there has been continued economic growth; power generation is higher than before the conflict; more Iraqis now have access to drinking water and sewerage systems; thousands of health care and education facilities have been rehabilitated; transport and telecommunication systems are improving and civil society groups and the media are flourishing and finding ways of engaging in the political process.

The Iraqi Government is leading on the rebuilding and development of Iraq. New Iraqi led donor co-ordination mechanisms are up and running in Baghdad. Sector working groups in health, education, energy, and rule of law are meeting regularly, led by Iraqi Ministries with support from the UN, the World Bank, and a range of donors. There is now an increasing number of international donors and representatives of the multilateral agencies based in Iraq.

DFID has so far disbursed more than £290 million on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Iraq since 2003. DFID's programme in 2005–06 focuses on:

advising the Iraqi Government on macro-economic reform;

building Iraqi Government institutions at the centre of government in Baghdad and in the four southern provinces;

improving power and water services in the south and helping the Iraqi government to develop a long-term power sector strategy;

supporting the development of Iraqi civil society organisations; and

encouraging broad participation in the political process.

DFID also provided £70 million to the international reconstruction fund facility for Iraq (IRFFI). The UN and the World Bank manage the IRFFI and continue to carry out a range of programmes in sectors such as health, education, and water and sanitation.

The following table outlines some of the major reconstruction achievements.

Area of reconstruction	*Achievements*
Economy	Rapid recovery with 50 per cent. growth in 2004. Inflation is under control and the new Iraqi Dinar is holding its value against the dollar. DFID support contributed to the Iraqi Government's successful negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2004 and 2005, paving the way for agreement of an 80 per cent. Paris Club debt reduction deal.
Power	In spite of regular sabotage and breakdowns of dilapidated infrastructure, power generation has remained above pre-war levels. However, demand has also increased dramatically as a result of economic growth and greater use of electrical goods. DFID has repaired transmission lines securing electricity supplies for 1.5 million residents of Basra; improved distribution to 13 areas of Basra and by summer 2006 will have added or secured 720MW.
Water and sanitation	1.25 million more Iraqis have access to drinking water than before the conflict; 9.6 million more have access to a sewerage system. DFID has repaired 4,880 leaks across the four southern governorates; provided technical advice for a major sewage installation in al Amarah, providing up to half the city's population with access to a piped system and replacing open sewage channels; and is currently establishing water towers to improve supplies to 500,000 people in the poorest district of Basra city.
Health	The Iraqi Government reports that health care spending is up more than 30 times on the pre-conflict level. Extensive disease control programmes, led by the Iraqi Government and UN agencies, have led to a decline in malaria, polio, measles, and rubella. Over 150 health care facilities have been rehabilitated and several thousand health care professionals have been trained.
Education	Over 3,500 schools have been rehabilitated. 69 million textbooks have been delivered to 19,000 schools. More than 30,000 school teachers and administrators trained.

Area of reconstruction	*Achievements*
Civil Society	2,500 Iraqi NGOs are now registered with the Iraqi Government. Freedom of speech has been established in law and independent media is flourishing. DFID has funded new, independent radio and TV stations in the south, and is supporting grass-roots Iraqi organisations such as women's groups, trade unions, and student organisations.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public Gateway reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23520]

Mr. Thomas: The exact number of IT projects of all sizes developed in DFID since 2001 cannot be determined without incurring a disproportionate cost. Three large current projects have been subject to the Gateway process, two assessed as medium risk and one as low risk. Gateway review reports have been produced for two of these projects and are confidential to the Senior Responsible Owners. Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000, each request for the release of information contained in a Gateway review is considered on a case-by-case basis. To date, DFID has received no FOI requests relating to Gateway reviews.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy amongst employees of his Department. [23412]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is committed to the development and maintenance of literacy and numeracy skills. We have a comprehensive skills development plan which takes account of the potential need for basic skills training and qualifications.

An employer toolkit on Adult Basic Skills is available on our intranet and we hold an annual in-house event during Adult Learning Week, which focuses on the assessment and development of literacy and numeracy. On our intranet, we advertise emails for providers of learning basic skills.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23417]

Mr. Thomas: In the Department for International Development (DFID), requests for training are usually handled between an employee and their line manager.

There are no centralised systems or processes that require line managers to record or report on the types of learning support requested by individual staff members.

At present therefore, the data requested could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

It is also worth noting that the perceived stigma involved in declaring skills deficit in literacy and numeracy may prevent employees from requesting this support from their line manager.

In recognition of this, DFID has appointed union learning representatives, and has developed internal web pages to enable staff to assess their skills and access support without going through their line manager.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head, in each year since 2002. [23433]

Mr. Thomas: Within the Department for International Development, the responsibility for setting and allocating training budgets is devolved to the departmental level. There are currently no centralised learning management e-systems to record or report on the types of learning activities associated with their training spend. The implementation of an e-system is planned for 2006.

Therefore, at present, the data requested could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Malawi

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the United Nations appeal for famine victims in Malawi has raised; and what steps the UK Government have taken to raise the funds requested by the United Nations. [22899]

Hilary Benn: As off 26 October 2005, the UN had received pledges of $29 million towards its Flash Appeal for Malawi. Prior to the UN Appeal, Malawi had received pledges of $60 million. Total pledges to the current food distribution programme as of 27 October were $89 million. The UK has contributed £15.2 million ($27.4 million) to the current crisis. Of this, £10.2 million (18.4 million), which was pledged before the UN Appeal, has paid for 70,000 tonnes of food and the financing of a logistics unit that is distributing food on behalf of the Government. A further pledge of £5 million, the largest response to the UN Appeal, has been used by the Government of Malawi to buy options on 60,000 tonnes of maize in case the food situation worsens; the purchase of seeds for next year's harvest plus support for UNICEF's nutritional rehabilitation units which treat severely malnourished children.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the famine in Malawi. [22900]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham to the response I gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mark Simmonds) on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 768W.

Marrakech Conference

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to fulfil the political declaration made at the Conference

of the Parties 7 in Marrakech to provide the balance of the original pledge for adaptation measures in less-developed countries. [23611]

Mr. Thomas: The EU, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and New Zealand are signatories to the Bonn Political Declaration, which commits them to contribute funding collectively of US $410 million annually from 2005 to 2008. Expenditure must be additional to expenditure levels in 2001. Any financial support that enables developing countries to respond to climate change, including reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to the impacts of climate change, capacity building and research counts towards the total.

The UK will meet its share of the Bonn Political Declaration through a variety of means, including our contribution to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) set up under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), our work with partner governments, and research.

DFID has committed a core contribution of £103 million to the GEF for the period 2002 to 2006 and an additional £15 million as a voluntary commitment, making the UK the fourth largest donor to the facility. Negotiations for the fourth replenishment are under way and will be complete by the end of 2005. Around a third of the GEF budget is spent on climate change.

DFID has committed £10 million over three years to the SCCF, which will be used to help developing countries to mainstream climate change responses into development planning, policies and implementation. The first tranche was disbursed in 2005.

DFID Bangladesh is providing £6 million over five years to support the UN Development Programme and the Government of Bangladesh to establish a Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme. This programme focuses on risk reduction, including longer term climate risks.

DFID's Central Research Department is initiating a £25 million collaborative research and capacity development programme on climate adaptation starting in 2006 for five years.

DFID is working to put climate risk assessment procedures in place for UK funded development in line with the G8 and Commission for Africa recommendations that investments in climate sensitive sectors should be screened to determine how their performance might be affected by climate risks.

DFID is also working to take forward other commitments made on climate change in the G8 Gleneagles Plan of Action, in particular, those related to helping developing countries obtain full benefit from the global climate observation system, arid a package of measures to make energy generation and consumption less carbon-intensive.

Microfinance Initiatives

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* funding and *(b)* other support his Department gave to microfinance initiatives in the developing world in the last financial year. [23057]

Mr. Thomas: DFID directly supports microfinance in 25 countries and has provided approximately £28 million during the last financial year. DFID also funds international agencies that actively support microfinance and financial sector development, such as the World Bank, the European Union, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), the International Finance Corporation and the Asian Development Bank.

Microfinance, or financial services for those on low or very low incomes, is a powerful tool to fight poverty and help reach the Millennium Development Goals. The UN Year for Microcredit 2005, has provided additional input to this agenda. However, in many developing countries, less than 10 per cent. of the population currently has effective access to formal financial services.

In addition to existing programmes, microfinance initiatives supported by DFID last year included:

Design of new financial sector programmes in Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria and Zambia.

Increased role for banks and other financial institutions to scale up provision of financial services.

Remittance country partnerships with Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria.

Better remittance product information and cost data to encourage competition and better products for migrants transferring money (www.senmoneyhome.org).

Joint support with the World Bank and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, to agree on indicators to measure access to financial services and to initiate such data collection beyond Southern Africa.

Millennium Development Goals

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress the Government are making towards meeting millennium development goal five on reducing global maternity mortality by two-thirds by 2015; and if he will make a statement. [22555]

Hilary Benn: Some 529,000 woman die in pregnancy and childbirth every year, equivalent to one woman every minute. Without considerably more action, target 5 of the millennium development goals (MDGs), to reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015, will not be met. Maternal mortality is one of the greatest indicators of the stark inequities between rich and poor. A woman in Sierra Leone, for example, faces a risk of dying each time she gives birth which is 200 times that of a woman in the UK.

Achieving this millennium goal will be difficult, but as outlined in our 2004 strategy for reducing maternal deaths, DFID is committed to a year-on-year increase in our support to improve maternal health and reduce maternal mortality. The UK has been recognised for having developed this strategy specific to maternal health (and remains the only bilateral donor to do so). Feedback indicates that the high level of political commitment to reducing maternal deaths by DFID is effectively raising the profile of this important development issue.

DFID is supporting work on maternal health through our bilateral country programmes, and assistance to the UN and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In India, where a quarter of all maternal deaths occur, political commitment is growing and DFID supports the national Reproductive and Child Health programme. In Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, Cambodia, China and Bangladesh, DFID continues to be at the forefront of work to reduce maternal deaths. In Africa, we are working against severe constraints (in part reflecting the impact of HIV and conflict on maternal deaths), to address the lack of human resources and basic health services. As described in the strategy, we ensure focus to the broader reproductive health and rights of women essential to preventing these unnecessary and tragic deaths.

DFID is also supporting the new global Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, as a catalyst in helping countries harness, for the benefit of women and children, the significant resources committed by the G8 and promised by the EU for poverty reduction.

Natural Disasters

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if his Department will assess the merits of providing deployable rapid assembly shelters for use following natural disasters; and if he will make a statement. [21656]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has considered the use of deployable rapid assembly shelters for use following natural disasters.

In any disaster situation, we consider a number of different factors when assessing what type of shelter is most suitable. These include the needs of the people, the average size of families, issues such as heating arrangements and cooking facilities based on the way the people normally use such items and the relative cost of the different options available. We then make a judgment on what shelter is the most appropriate for any given disaster or situation.

We also consider the availability of transport to move items around the country, to ensure that materials sent to a disaster region are distributed immediately. In addition we must also consider how easy it is to build and maintain the shelters that we do send.

In the case of the devastation caused by the South Asia earthquake, we believe that winterised family tents are the most cost effective and efficient use of aid resources.

Nicaragua

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 31–32W, on Nicaragua, what steps he takes to ensure monies allocated for dispersal by the Nicaraguan authorities in the Atlantic Coast Region are spent there. [23560]

Mr. Thomas: A key way to ensure moneys are spent as intended is to have an effective, independent and reliable audit system. As the result of the support of a number of donors, the Nicaraguan National Comptroller's Office will soon be able to share its audit of all central Government expenditure (for 2004 expenditure) with donors for the first time. DFID, together with German aid, is providing the support needed also to complete the first audit of all municipal government expenditure (for 2004 and 2005 expenditure) by the third quarter of 2006. Together, these audits will enable donors to compare actual expenditure with planned expenditure for the bulk of activities funded by the Government of Nicaragua, including monies allocated for the Atlantic Coast Region.

DFID's support for the audit of municipal authorities is part of a recently approved £1.5 million project to strengthen the accountability of municipal governments. The project will also support the ability of private sector organisations and civil society to monitor the performance of municipalities. This will increase the pressure on them to use monies as intended.

The Nicaraguan Ministry of Finance has recently introduced a financial management system that provides web access to monthly statements of unaudited expenditure by sector, department and institution, this information can be found the web address at: (www.consultaciudadana.gob.ni/cciudadana). The Nicaraguan Ministry of Finance is also able to analyse expenditure by region and intends to make these reports available on the web as well in the near future.

Nigeria

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what transparency and accountability mechanisms the Department has in place to ensure that debt relief for Nigeria is used to alleviate poverty; and if he will make a statement. [22557]

Hilary Benn: The Nigerian Government have decided that all of the savings from debt relief will be dedicated to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. For 2006, these savings will be around $1 billion. The Nigerian Government are ensuring that this is spent on poverty reduction through an expenditure tracking system known as a "Virtual Poverty Fund". This will track the flow of funds into spending on sectors such as health, education, water, agriculture, power and roads.

The President has welcomed international involvement in overseeing expenditure through this mechanism and has set up a high level committee including donors and civil society; the structure should be in place by the end of this year. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will monitor progress with reform as part of the debt deal. The World Bank will also carry out a public expenditure review next year.

Pakistan

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what response the UK Government have made to the requests by the President of Pakistan for heavy transport helicopters. [19936]

Mr. Thomas: On the 20 October, the Secretary of State for International Development announced that Britain would provide an additional £20 million towards the earthquake relief effort in Pakistan. Part of that provision would fund three British military CH-47 Chinook helicopters (up to £3.0 million), in addition to the helicopter operations already being part-funded

(£1.0 million) by the Department for International Development (DFID) through the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Renewable Energy

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department has given to promoting renewable energy strategies in developing countries. [23061]

Hilary Benn: Improved access to affordable and reliable energy supplies and services is essential for developing countries to increase their economic growth and achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals.

DFID has welcomed the decision last year by the World Bank Group to increase its annual lending for renewable energy and energy efficiency by an average of 20 per cent. per year, over the five years to 2010. DFID is working with the World Bank to see if a higher level of investment can be achieved.

DFID has provided £10 million for energy research projects, mostly over the past eight years, of which about £3.6 million was spent on the development and promotion of renewable energy, especially for rural communities. This has included a wide range of technologies such as wind, small hydropower, solar and biomass.

DFID is currently working with international networks such as the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) and the EU Energy Initiative (EUEI) to promote access to affordable energy services, drawing on the full menu of technology options, including renewable energy.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effect on the humanitarian effort of militia activity along tribal lines in Darfur. [23984]

Hilary Benn: Tribal allegiance is one factor which influences the organisation and actions of militias in Darfur, for both the Arab militias and the rebel movements, but there are many other factors, including political and financial gain.

In his most recent report, the UN Secretary General refers to frequent harassment and assaults on humanitarian aid workers during incidents of banditry. He states that these attacks have increased in cruelty and violence. Insecurity caused by the presence and activities of armed groups result in limited humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. All parties to the conflict have an obligation to ensure access for humanitarian agencies, and we condemn any activities, which impede the humanitarian response.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of people in need of food aid in Darfur. [24388]

Hilary Benn: The UN World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 3.2 million people in Darfur required food aid in October 2005. The WFP and other UN agencies are conducting their annual assessment of food needs in Darfur, which will provide a more accurate picture of the needs in 2006. We expect the results will be released in December.

World Trade System

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with groups advocating reform of the world trade system. [22697]

Hilary Benn: A trading system which is fair and supports development is fundamental. With the World Trade Organisation's ministerial conference in Hong Kong only weeks away, securing the best outcome from the conference and the trade round itself has been a theme of numerous discussions I have had in recent weeks with counterparts from the European Union, developing countries and civil society groups. This will remain a priority.

Zambia

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what reports he has received of fuel shortages in Zambia; and if he will make a statement. [22556]

Hilary Benn: My right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State recently visited Lusaka and was briefed by DFID staff about the fuel shortages. He met with Mr. Dipak Patel, Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, who was subsequently appointed by President Mwanawasa to head a ministerial committee on the fuel shortages. The committee is resolving the crisis and developing a medium term strategy to ensure better fuel supplies.

Recent shutdowns at Indeni in Ndola (Zambia's only oil refinery) seriously disrupted supplies of petrol and diesel. There have been long queues at filling stations around the country. Major businesses including the copper mines and commercial agriculture have been affected. Continued fuel shortages will reduce economic growth and increase inflation. Rising transport costs have pushed up other prices.

Food prices are of particular concern given the recent drought and there may be a rise in the number of people in need of food aid. DFID is assessing the case for more humanitarian relief over and above recently agreed funding of the World Food Programme and Oxfam in Zambia.

Last week, most parts of the country had some petrol and diesel due to more refined supplies being brought into the country by tankers. However, the situation is not back to normal. The Indeni refinery is not yet operating effectively. The lack of reserves remains a concern.

On 5 October 2005, the Zambian Government requested support from DFID to advise on options for future petroleum supplies in the country, including a technical and financial review of the Indeni refinery. DFID organised the visit of an expert to Lusaka to discuss these requests with Minster Patel and agree on their scope. DFID will be providing further support in co-operation with other development agencies.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Autistic Children

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what plans she has to introduce a requirement of minimum training standards for people who work with autistic children; and if she will make a statement; [24275]

(2) how much teacher training time is devoted to lessons on training to identify children with dyslexia; and if she will make a statement. [24276]

Maria Eagle: The National Standards for Qualified Teacher Status, and the Induction Standards for Newly Qualified Teachers, both cover special educational needs (SEN), which would include autistic spectrum disorders as well as specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. The requirements are designed to ensure that teachers are able to support pupils with SEN and can differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of such pupils.

The National Occupational Standards for Teaching/Classroom Assistants also contain elements relevant to working with pupils with SEN or particular educational needs. Similarly, the Standards for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), for which the Training and Development Agency for Schools is responsible, require HLTAs to be familiar with guidance about meeting SEN given in the SEN Code of Practice. The IDA will be reviewing its standards as part of its new responsibilities for the school work force.

Some social workers also come into contact with autistic children and their families. The new Social Work degree was introduced in 2003 as a three year course to improve the skills base and competence of newly-qualified social workers. For non qualified Social Care staff, the National Minimum Standards, set by the Department of Health, require that 50 per cent. of care staff and 100 per cent. of registered managers achieve an NVQ qualification by 2005/06.

Information as to the specific amount of time allocated by teacher training institutions or schools to training in particular aspects of SEN, such as autism and dyslexia, is not collected centrally by the Department. However, we have pointed to the importance of these areas. The Good Practice Guidance on Autistic Spectrum Disorders, which the Departments for Education and Skills and Health published in 2002, made knowledge and understanding of ASDs the first of its key principles which should underlie provision for children with the disorders. It advised that

> "all those who plan and provide for children with an ASD should have some knowledge and understanding of autism".

As regards dyslexia, the Department's Primary National Strategy has produced an extensive range of specific guidance material for schools on evidence-based interventions for children with significant literacy and numeracy difficulties. A three wave model of intervention has been developed, designed to identify and support those children experiencing difficulty in literacy and/or mathematics, a good many of whom are likely to fall somewhere on the dyslexia spectrum.

We have also produced guidance material on classroom strategies to enable dyslexic pupils to access learning and have recently released a new interactive CD-ROM based in-service training resource, "Learning and teaching for dyslexic children". This has been developed in collaboration with the British Dyslexia Association and the Dyslexia Institute. The resource is designed to help school staff increase their awareness and understanding of the barriers to learning presented by dyslexia, and the teaching strategies that can be used to overcome them.

Dental Schools

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what extra allocation of dental school training places was made for 2005–06; to which dental schools; how many of these extra places were temporary allocations for one year; and if she will make a statement. [24256]

Bill Rammell: Intake targets for English dental schools have been increased by 261 for 2005–06. The allocations by dental school are shown in the table.

Allocations of additional dental school training places 2005–06

Dental school	*Permanent allocation*	*Temporary allocation*	*Total*
Birmingham	11	15	26
Bristol	28	9	37
King's College London	13	18	31
Leeds	22	9	31
Liverpool	25	15	40
Newcastle	7	20	27
Queen Mary, University of London	23	9	32
Sheffield	28	9	37
Total	157	104	261

Source:
HEFCE.

These changes represent a significant expansion of dental student intake targets from 576 to 837, and have enabled actual undergraduate dental numbers to increase by 170. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Department of Health are currently in the process of assessing bids to make permanent arrangements for the temporary allocations, and will make recommendations to the HEFCE Board in January. HEFCE and the Department for Health intend to inform institutions of the Board's decision early in the new year, and will be assessing the need for further expansion in dental places in the lead up to the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much energy has been consumed by her Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22452]

Maria Eagle: Energy consumption and spend in the Departments' HQ buildings in each of the last five years' is shown as follows:

	Kwh	*Spend (£)*
2004/05	30,612,603	1,226,279
2003/04	29,628,144	987,309
2002/03	30,956,504	998,339
2001/02	34,856,203	1,120,938
2000/01	34,883,455	1,025,894

Departmental Research

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list research commissioned by the Department in the past 12 months. [24514]

Bill Rammell: I am able to list the 68 research projects that the DfES has commissioned in the past 12 months (from 1 November 2004 to 1 November 2005).

List of research commissioned by the DfES since 1 November 2004

1. A Study Of Suitable Methods For Raising School and Pupil Response Rates In Educational Research.
2. Adoption Initiative: Supporting the birth relatives of adopted children and supporting post-adoption contact in complex cases.
3. Analysis of predicted A level grades and offers in sample applicants in 2004 cycle.
4. Apprenticeship Pay: A Survey of Earnings by Sector.
5. Behaviour and Education Support Team Evaluation.
6. Benefits Interaction Survey.
7. Case Studentship—Institute of Education EPPE team.
8. Child care and early years provider survey.
9. Children and Young People's Home Use of ICT for Educational Purposes: The Impact on Attainment of Key Stages 1–4.
10. Connexions Direct: "Users Views' survey and mystery shopping exercise.
11. Consultancy for the PISA Technical Review Group.
12. Consultancy for the PISA Technical Review Group.
13. Data linking for HE monitoring, research and evaluation.
14. Developing Extensions To DEA Techniques.
15. Developing New Techniques For DEA (part 2).
16. Dissemination of the Review of Fostering Research.
17. Educating Difficult Adolescents.
18. Effects of pupil grouping.
19. Estimating The Relationship Between School Resources and Pupil Attainment at GCSE.
20. Evaluating Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professionals Guidance and Implementation.
21. Evaluation Of Aimhigher.
22. Evaluation of Family Resolutions
23. Evaluation of Full Service Extended Schools (Stage 2).
24. Evaluation of Parent Partnership Services.
25. Evaluation of the Connexions through children's trusts case studies.
26. Examining the feasibility and desirability of an evolved CDL programme for learning below level 4.
27. Extended Services in Schools: Baseline Survey of Maintained Schools in 2005.
28. Foundation research on the motivations and mindsets of young people
29. Further Work on The Impact of School Resourcing on Attainment in Secondary Schools.
30. Higher Education Institutions' Finances and Provision: Baseline Institutional Case Studies.
31. How do young people make choices at KS3 & 4?
32. Impact of e-learning in FE survey.
33. Improving qualifications information in the LFS.
34. Learning from the Family Support Grant.
35. Linking up directories of children's services.
36. Literature review of phonics use.
37. London Challenge: Pupil and Teacher Surveys 2005.
38. London Challenge: Third Survey of Parents and Carers 2005.
39. Main Stage of the Evaluation of the Extended Schools Child care and Child care Taster Pilots.
40. Mapping of qualifications and training development across the children and young people's workforce.
41. NALS 2005.
42. National Audit of Low Incidence Special Educational Needs Support, Services and Provision.
43. National Research Co-ordination For England's Participation in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).
44. OECD Thematic Review Of Tertiary Education.
45. Parental Involvement in Children's Education.
46. Partners Surveys.
47. Provider Performance Case Studies.
48. Quality of Child care in the Millennium Cohort Study.
49. Research into the deployment patterns of mathematics and science teachers.
50. Research into the recruitment, deployment and management of supply teachers in England.
51. Research on employers use and views on vocational qualifications.
52. Research to inform the management and governance of children's centres.
53. Safeguarding immigrant children.
54. School meals in primary schools.
55. Schools' Use of Data in Teaching and Learning.
56. Special Educational Needs and Minority Ethnic Groups: a literature review.
57. Student Loan Repayment Models 2005.
58. Study of the Impact of e-learning on participation, retention and attainment in Further Education.
59. Study of the impact of level 2 learning and qualifications—main stage.
60. Teaching Approaches to promote consistent level 4 performance in key stage 2 English and Mathematics.
61. The Children, Young People and Families Tracking Study—Every Child Matters: Children's Workforce Research Project.
62. The role of Training Allowances in incentivising the behaviour of young people and employers.
63. The School Sports Partnership Programme: Evaluation 2005/06.
64. Tracking EPPE pupils from KS2 to KS3.
65. Using Cross Classified Models to Improve Estimates of the Determination of Pupil Attainment: Literature Review and Scoping Study.
66. Validation Study of the Pisa 2000, Pisa-2003 and Timss-2003 International Studies of Pupil Attainment (ISAS).
67. Validity Study of the Use of an Aptitude Test in University Entrance.

68. Why here? Report of qualitative work with teachers working in schools above and below the floor targets.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23473]

Maria Eagle: The information requested could not be identified from the Departmental Resource Accounting System and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Department for Education and Skills do not hold any works of art on its Asset Register.

The Departments Asset Register records assets with a value over £2,500. Items of art below £2,500 may or may not have been purchased but could not be identified from the Departmental Resource Accounting System.

Education White Paper

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with the Prime Minister during the preparation of the Education White Paper. [22679]

Ruth Kelly: I have had a number of constructive discussions with the Prime Minister in preparing the White Paper.

Further Education

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Department has for reviewing the levels of funding allocated to further education in *(a)* Coventry and *(b)* England. [24040]

Bill Rammell: On 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published "Priorities for Success"—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult work force. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between government, employers and learners to achieve this.

The Chancellor announced in the 2004 spending review settlement for education and skills in April 2004, that there will be over £1 billion of additional investment in the learning and skills sector by 2007–08. We will not know what this will mean for regional and local budgets until allocations are made by the National LSC Office, following receipt of the grant letter from my Department.

Graduate Numbers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the working age population in *(a)* Ribble Valley and *(b)* Lancashire hold a qualification (i) at degree level and (ii) above degree level. [24312]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows analysis of the qualification levels of the working age population in the Ribble Valley and Lancashire at degree level (level 4) and above degree level (level 5). This is presented alongside England average data for comparison. Data comes from the Local Labour Force Survey for 2004–05.

Percentage

Qualification level	*Ribble Valley*	*Lancashire*	*England*
Above degree level (level 5)	4.2	3.8	5.3
Degree level (level 4)	29.4	21.6	20.8

Note:

The working age population is defined as males and females aged 16 to 64 and 16 to 59 respectively.

IT Projects

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list for each IT project her Department has undertaken since May 1997 which has incurred a total expenditure of £5 million or more *(a)* the name of the project, *(b)* its intended purpose, *(c)* the principal contractors involved and the payments made to each, *(d)* the original estimate of the cost of the project, *(e)* the actual outturn of expenditure on the project, *(f)* the intended date on which the project was to be fully implemented, *(g)* the actual date on which it was fully implemented or cancelled, *(h)* modifications which have been made to the project since it was first commissioned, *(i)* contractors on the project whose contracts have been cancelled, *(j)* replacement or additional contractors on the project, *(k)* the most reliable estimate of public expenditure saved as a result of implementing the project and *(l)* the most reliable estimates of improved performance of departmental functions as a result of implementing the project. [20623]

Maria Eagle: The information as requested is not readily available centrally within the Department for Education and Skills. To respond fully would involve an extensive internal and external information collection exercise which would exceed the recommended disproportionate cost threshold.

To be helpful, current departmental records show that the following nine live ICT-enabled programmes and projects each exceed or will exceed a total expenditure of £5 million. Also included in the list are details of the Department's individual learning account (ILA) programme which has previously been subject to

scrutiny by the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Committee[1], and UK e-university project which has previously been subject to scrutiny by the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee[2]. The list is not exhaustive. Expenditure does not include DfES staff and associated costs.

[1] House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2003), individual learning accounts, Tenth Report of Session 2002–03 (Ref: HC 544), TSO, London.

[2] House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee (2005), UK e-university, Third Report of Session 2004–05 (Ref: HC 205), TSO, London.

Project name	*Intended purpose*	*Cost or estimated cost*
Individual learning accounts (ILAs)	To widen participation in learning and to help overcome financial barriers faced by individuals (especially those with -accounts particular learning or skill needs). (Introduced in England in September 2000, the ILA scheme was successful in attracting over one million people back into learning. However, in November 2001, the Government withdrew it following allegations of fraud and abuse.)	Total expenditure is likely to exceed £290 million against a budget of £199 million. (The scale of fraud and abuse is estimated at £97 million, including £67 million fraud.)
UK e-university	To provide internet-based UK higher education to an expanding global market.	£50 million
IS index project	To deliver a solution to facilitate contact between practitioners from different services and agencies which will, in turn, enable them to share information appropriately and securely for the benefit of children, young people and families.	Estimated one-off implementation costs £225 million over three-five years. Ongoing annual operational costs estimated at £64 million per annum thereafter.
Strategic technologies and value for schools programme	To reduce risk and create a more coherent approach to ICT procurement and provision in schools.	£431 million capital £140 million revenue, plus programme costs approx £12 million over three-year (£10.5 million Becta, £1.5 million DfES)
Student support modernisation programme	To modernise student support arrangements for England and Wales	Estimated £15 million.

Project name	*Intended purpose*	*Cost or estimated cost*
Key Stage 3 ICT assessment programme	To develop and implement an onscreen test of pupils' ICT capability at the end of Key Stage 3, and ensure schools' readiness to administer the test.	£29 million.
Change for children programme	To enable children and young people to receive the universal services they are entitled to and any additional services they need at the earliest opportunity.	Estimate: £250–300 million development/ implementation costs, £60 million P/A running costs.
SLC academic year 06/07 delivery programme	New IT system to modernise Student Loans Company" business processes and enhance delivery of student finance to customers.	£14.635 million.
Teacher development agency customer communication service programme	Provision of a service to convert eligible enquirers into applicants for initial teacher training.	£9 million.
Electronic data and records management system (EDRMS)	DfES (Internal) electronic records management system.	Up to £5.93 million.
Bichard bvetting and barring scheme	To design a vetting and barring scheme that meets the requirements of recommendation 19 of the Bichard Inquiry at an appropriate cost, with implementation in 2007.To reduce the incidence of harm to children and vulnerable adults by those who work with them by identifying and removing those known to be unsuitable from the workforce.	£18.1 million for implementation (2005/06 to 2007/08). Long-term funding arrangements for operation of the scheme to be agreed with OGDs.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many IT projects have been developed for her Department since 2001; and whether she has agreed to make public *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part the Gateway Reviews for these projects. [23516]

Maria Eagle: The information as requested is not readily available centrally within the Department for Education and Skills. To respond to the question fully would involve an extensive internal and external information collection exercise which would exceed the recommended disproportionate cost threshold. However, to be helpful, current departmental records confirm that in excess of 72 DfES-led IT projects have gone through the Office for Government Commerce Gateway Review process since 2001.

With regard to the release of Gateway Review Reports, as these are conducted on a confidential basis for the Senior Responsible Owner of the project concerned the information contained within the reports is not proactively or routinely released. However, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000, requests for the release of information contained in Gateway Review reports are considered on a case-by-case basis. To date, the Department has received no such FOIA requests.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much her Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002; [23428]

(2) how many employees in her Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002; [23373]

(3) what steps she is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees of her Department. [23407]

Maria Eagle: Within my Department, the prime responsibility for developing and coaching staff lies with line managers who are best placed to assess individual needs. Most learning takes place on the job and is supplemented by centrally provided basic skills development through the Department's internal learning and development unit. Since 2002 the internal learning and development unit has spent £7,000 on basic skills activities.

In addition activities take place across the Department which incorporate elements of basic skills within them. It is not possible to separate these out or quantify costs.

Since 2002, 17 people have requested training from the learning and development unit. In addition, there will be other staff who are developed by their line managers where records are not held centrally.

The Department's basic skills framework encourages staff to sit the national tests to gain accreditation and recognition for their learning. The national tests are, typically, part of recognised basic skills programmes.

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her Department's contribution to the establishment of the new deal for skills. [21813]

Phil Hope: The Department for Education and Skills is working with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Trade and Industry and Her Majesty's Treasury to develop a package of measures that are known collectively as new deal for skills. As announced in Budget 2004, new deal for skills is a package of measures to help people move from welfare into sustainable, productive work and help adults in employment progress from low to higher-skilled work. For those moving from welfare into work, new deal for skills comprises three main strands: Skills coaching, skills passports and the adult learning option and is jointly project managed by DfES and DWP. DfES has made available £4 million in 2005–06 for the development and trials of skills coaching and skills passports which are being delivered by the Learning and Skills Council to support DWP priority customers.

DfES has been actively involved in the design and development of the DWP-led adult learning option which aims to test the effectiveness of providing financial support to encourage low skilled Jobcentre Plus customers to take full time Level 2 learning where a lack of skills is considered to be the barrier to a return to the labour market.

In supporting progression for those adults in work, the new national employer training programme (NETP), which will be rolled out from April 2006, will encourage employers to develop people at all levels. Unemployed people who are engaged in the new deal for skills and who join an NETP participating company will be able to draw on the services of a skills coach to help them through their first few months of employment and development.

School Standards and Framework Act

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times she has exercised powers under section 19 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 in each year since 1998. [24326]

Jacqui Smith: The Secretary of State's power under section 19 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 has provided a powerful stimulus to local authorities to take action in anticipation of any use of that power. The Secretary of State has not so far issued any such directions to local authorities, since in cases where the use of this power may have been considered, the local authority has used its own powers to close the school.

School Transport

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in *(a)* England, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Ribble Valley receive free transport to (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools. [24631]

Jacqui Smith: A joint survey conducted by DfES, the Confederation of Education and Childrens Service Managers and the Audit Commission, covering local authority school transport policies, expenditure and pupil numbers carried, was published for the first time in January 2004. It reported that about 700,000 pupils received free and assisted home to school transport in England, and that just under 13,500 pupils received free or assisted transport to mainstream schools in Lancashire in 2001/02. No more detailed information is available.

Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 217–22W, on schools, if she will list the actions she has approved for each school; and whether she has exercised her powers under section 45 of the Education Act 2005. [24324]

Jacqui Smith: The action approved for individual schools, over and above the input from local authorities, is set out in the following table. In summary, additional funding has been approved for seven schools to improve capacity; 14 schools have been supported by School Improvement Partnership Boards, also with additional funding; an Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been approved for eight schools; Fresh Start proposals have been approved for three schools; four schools are part of London Challenge initiatives; and proposals have been approved for three schools to become Academies. Proposals for further Academies and another Fresh Start are currently under consideration. The power to close a school under Section 45 of the 2005 Education Act has provided a powerful stimulus to local authorities to take action in anticipation of any use of that power and has not yet been used.

School	Local authority	Date into special measures	Funding to improve capacity	SIPB	IEB	Fresh Start	Academies	London Challenge
The Warren Comprehensive	Barking and Dagenham	13 May 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bishop Douglass School Finchley	Barnet	13 November 2003	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Clitterhouse Junior School	Barnet	3 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hollickwood Primary School	Barnet	20 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Mary's CE High School	Barnet	22 October 2003	Yes	—	—	—	—	Yes
Elmhirst School, The	Barnsley	21 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandhill Primary School	Barnsley	8 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oak Bank School	Bedfordshire	24 September 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Highters Heath Primary School	Birmingham	16 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oldknow Junior School	Birmingham	8 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Darwen Moorland High School	Blackburn	20 November 2003	—	—	Yes	—	Yes	—
Boundary Community Primary School	Blackpool	7 November 2002	—	—	—	—	—	—
Immanuel CofE Community College	Bradford	21 January 2004	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Rhodesway School	Bradford	18 December 2002	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Usher Street Primary School and Nursery	Bradford	10 July 2003	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Wedgwood School and Community Nursery	Bradford	12 October 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Windhill CE Primary School	Bradford	11 February 2004	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Wyke Manor School	Bradford	10 May 2004	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
St. Andrew and St. Francis CofE Primary School	Brent	21 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hengrove School	Bristol	14 November 2003	—	Yes	—	—	Yes	—
Portway Community School	Bristol	14 November 2004	—	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Mount Pellon Junior and Infant School	Calderdale	21 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Robartes Junior School	Cornwall	24 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Ives Junior School	Cornwall	15 February 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Meriadoc CofE Junior School	Cornwall	21 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tollgate Primary School	Croydon	14 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Winterbourne Nursery and Infants' School	Croydon	30 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Morton Park Primary School	Cumbria	12 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wyndham School	Cumbria	2 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Derby City PRU	Derby	30 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Merrill College	Derby	25 September 2003	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Moorhead Primary School	Derby	8 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
East-the-Water Community Primary School	Devon	25 September 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Adwick Park Junior School	Doncaster	28 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northcliffe School	Doncaster	27 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Portland Tophill Junior School	Dorset	30 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Old Park School	Dudley	26 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flamborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	East Riding	14 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rawcliffe Pupil Referral Unit	East Riding	11 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seaford Head Community College	East Sussex	29 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ashingdon School	Essex	4 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holy Trinity CofE VC Primary School	Essex	19 December 2002	—	—	—	—	—	—
Langenhoe Community Primary School	Essex	27 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lexden Springs School	Essex	20 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Peter's High School and Technology College	Essex	3 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Templars Infant and Nursery School	Essex	4 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vange Primary School and Nursery	Essex	12 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sandford School	Gloucestershire	12 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bishop John Robinson CE Primary School	Greenwich	22 September 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Holy Trinity CE Primary School	Hackney	30 September 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Halton High School	Halton	12 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Burlington Danes CofE School	Hammersmith & Fulham	25 May 2004	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Hurlingham and Chelsea Secondary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	4 March 2004	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Oak Farm Community School	Hampshire	4 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Downhills Primary School	Haringey	2 December 2002	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Stanmore Nursery, First and Middle School	Harrow	22 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Owton Manor Primary School	Hartlepool	21 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
King's Wood School	Havering	30 April 2004	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
Weobley High School	Herefordshire	8 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cotlenswood School	Hertfordshire	26 November 2005	—	—	—	—	—	—
Abbotsfield School for Boys	Hillingdon	7 January 2003	—	—	—	—	—	Yes
Bromstone Primary School, Broadstairs	Kent	20 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
George Spurgen Community Primary School	Kent	12 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—

School	*Local authority*	*Date into special measures*	*Funding to improve capacity*	*SIPB*	*IEB*	*Fresh Start*	*Academies*	*London Challenge*
Homewood Infant School	Kent	7 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lawn Primary School	Kent	3 April 2000	—	—	—	—	—	—
Minster College	Kent	5 December 2003	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
St. Mary of Charity CE (Aided) Primary School	Kent	22 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whitehill Junior School	Kent	22 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Endeavour High School	Kingston Upon Hull	26 March 2004	Yes	—	—	—	—	—
Birkby Junior School	Kirklees	26 March 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
ETHOS Primary Pupil Referral Unit	Kirklees	10 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rawthorpe High School	Kirklees	28 March 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rawthorpe Junior School	Kirklees	29 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Skerton Community High School	Lancashire	13 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Intake High School Arts College	Leeds	29 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
New College Leicester	Leicester City	9 December 2003	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Queensmead Junior School	Leicester City	12 November 2002	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Peter and St. Paul Church of England Primary School, Burgh-Le-Marsh, The	Lincolnshire	24 June 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sutton Bridge Westmere Community Primary School	Lincolnshire	24 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Pinchbeck East Church of England Primary School	Lincolnshire	30 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ashcroft High School	Luton	19 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Putteridge High School	Luton	4 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meade Hill School	Manchester	10 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Warren Wood Community Primary School and Language Unit	Medway	11 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mitcham Vale High School	Merton	2 July 2004	—	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
The Radcliffe School	Milton Keynes	20 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gillingham, St. Michael's CofE Voluntary Aided First School	Norfolk	11 May 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Silverdale School	North Tyneside	6 March 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Duston Upper School	Northamptonshire	18 September 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Orchard School	Northamptonshire	10 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sherwood Hall School and Sixth Form College	Nottinghamshire	21 March 2003	Yes	Yes	—	—	—	—
The Gedling School	Nottinghamshire	13 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
East Crompton St. George's CofE School	Oldham	21 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hardman Fold Community Special School	Oldham	28 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northfield School	Oxfordshire	26 April 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Knowle Primary School	Plymouth	19 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hainault Forest High School	Redbridge	21 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	Yes
Redbridge Junior School	Redbridge	16 August 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bullough Moor Primary School	Rochdale	25 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moorhouse Primary School	Rochdale	12 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wingfield Comprehensive School	Rotherham	30 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Harrop Fold School	Salford	24 June 2003	—	Yes	—	—	—	—
Irwell Park High School	Salford	30 April 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Moorside High School	Salford	23 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Albion High School	Salford	20 September 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Langley Primary School	Sandwell	5 November 2003	—	—	Yes	—	Yes	—
Rood End Primary School	Sandwell	2 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Shircliffe Junior School	Sheffield	8 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Langleywood School	Slough	6 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Middlezoy Primary School	Somerset	22 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Severn Beach Primary School	South Gloucestershire	25 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Prittlewell Technology College	Southend	16 June 2004	—	—	—	Yes	—	—
Thorpe Bay School	Southend	10 June 1999	—	—	Yes	Yes	—	—
Cobourg Primary School	Southwark	8 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Galleywall Primary School	Southwark	4 March 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Robert Browning Primary School	Southwark	27 February 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newton-le-Willows Community High School	St. Helens	15 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Amington Heath Community School	Staffordshire	15 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nether Stowe High School	Staffordshire	17 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Springhill Primary School	Staffordshire	12 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kirkley Middle (Sec) School	Suffolk	24 June 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bishop David Brown School, The	Surrey	25 November 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Potters Gate CofE Primary School	Surrey	24 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Watchetts Junior School	Surrey	2 December 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seven Fields Primary School	Swindon	26 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Micklehurst All Saints CofE Primary School	Tameside	2 April 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Stretford High School Community Language College	Trafford	22 January 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Church Mead Junior School	Waltham Forest	1 October 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Horizon Centre	Warrington	24 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—

School	Local authority	Date into special measures	Funding to improve capacity	SIPB	IEB	Fresh Start	Academies	London Challenge
Woolston Community High School	Warrington	12 March 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hartshill School	Warwickshire	21 April 2004	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
Queen Elizabeth School	Warwickshire	5 February 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
St. Francis Catholic Primary School	Warwickshire	29 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Two Porches School	Wigan	7 June 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Corsley CE Primary School	Wiltshire	5 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bromsgrove, Catshill Middle (Sec) School	Worcestershire	22 October 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kidderminster PRU	Worcestershire	29 July 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
Leigh and Bransford Primary School	Worcestershire	6 August 2004	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Bromsgrove High School	Worcestershire	4 February 2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Redgrove School	Worcestershire	16 June 2004	—	—	—	Yes	—	—

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools had been in special measures for *(a)* less than one year, *(b)* between one and two years, *(c)* between two and three years and *(d)* over three years on 31 December in each year since 1997. [24325]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is set out in the following table, plus the most recent figures at September 2005 for comparison purposes.

Schools in special measures

As at 31 December:	Less than 1 year	1–2 years	2–3 years	Over 3 years	Total
1997	240	136	35	2	413
1998	272	185	49	11	517
1999	190	198	34	8	430
2000	191	135	35	8	369
2001	133	119	37	10	299
2002	138	89	34	9	270
2003	195	89	18	11	313
2004	158	134	16	7	315
2005	93	117	26	2	238

Sex Education

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned on the effects of the provision of sex education on the level of teenage pregnancy. [24187]

Maria Eagle: The factors that influence the rate of teenage pregnancy are complex and it is difficult to be precise about the impact that a single factor—such as the quality of sex and relationships education (SRE)—has on individuals' choices or rates of teenage pregnancy in particular locations. However, we do know that:

The Social Exclusion Unit's report on Teenage Pregnancy (1999) identified "ignorance" of sex as a major contributory factor in England's high rate of teenage pregnancy, and argued that improving the quality of SRE should be a key element of the multi-faceted strategy to halve the rate of under-18 conceptions by 2010;

The evidence-base for the teenage pregnancy strategy was reviewed by the Health Development Agency in 2003, which concluded that There is good evidence on the effectiveness of school based sex education, particularly linked to contraceptive services, in preventing unintended teenage pregnancies; and

The national evaluation of the first four years of the teenage pregnancy strategy shows that young women receiving the greatest number of SRE lessons and reporting that SRE fully met their needs, are significantly less likely to become pregnant before 18.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to encourage the teaching of sex education in schools, with particular reference to *(a)* preventing teenage pregnancy and *(b)* informing young people of the risk of contracting HIV and sexually-transmitted diseases. [24188]

Maria Eagle: There is a statutory duty on secondary schools to teach key aspects of sex and relationships education (SRE)—in particular teaching about human reproduction and STIs and HIV—within the statutory science curriculum.

DfES further recommends that schools should teach about sex and relationships within the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and in 2000 issued non-statutory guidance on SRE to help schools achieve this objective. PSHE aims to give young people the skills and knowledge to avoid a range of negative outcomes, including unplanned pregnancies and STIs.

DfES is also supporting improved delivery of PSHE by providing continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers and community nurses involved in delivering PSHE; developing guidance for schools to help them better assess what young people are learning in PSHE; and by making it a requirement that schools who achieve healthy school status must have an effective PSHE programme in place.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to support children with special educational needs, with particular reference to Gravesham. [19622]

Maria Eagle: Local authorities have important and extensive duties to identify, assess and make provision for children with special educational needs and to keep their arrangements for doing so under review. Schools, early education settings, local authorities and others

must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, which gives guidance on carrying out their statutory duties under the 1996 Education Act. Decisions about the support to be provided for children in Gravesham are a matter for the Kent local authority, taking account of their statutory duties. The Government have no direct role in this.

More broadly, the national policy on SEN is set out in the Government's SEN strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement", published in February 2004. The strategy sets out a long-term programme to improve SEN provision and to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEN. As part of this strategy, the Department is promoting more consistent practice through a team of national SEN advisers. The advisers are working with all local authorities to provide support and challenge on key SEN issues, including the management of provision for children with special needs.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to ensure the recommendations in "Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for Special Educational Needs" is fully implemented across the country; and if she will make a statement. [24278]

Maria Eagle: Much progress has already been made on implementing the long-term programme of action set out within "Removing Barriers to Achievement". A team of national advisers for Special Educational Needs (SEN) is working with local authorities across the country to take forward the action in the strategy. The advisers, together with the network of 11 SEN Regional Partnerships, will help to identify and disseminate effective practice in provision for children with SEN. The implementation of Removing Barriers to Achievement is an integral part of the Government's policies to improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities and their families.

Tuition Fees

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on the recent advertising campaign on tuition fees. [23457]

Bill Rammell: The Student Finance campaign is aimed at potential higher education students and their parents, in England only, to raise awareness and understanding of the new student finance arrangements that will come into force in September 2006. Although the campaign includes messages around the new fee arrangements its key focus remains to raise awareness of the fact that there is financial help available for all students in higher education. The cost of this advertising in 2005/06 will be around £2.5 million.

All costs exclude VAT.

University Admissions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been budgeted for the consultation on post-qualification university applications. [23217]

Bill Rammell: To date, the modest costs of this consultation have comprised DfES staff time; and some expenditure associated with meetings of a consultation group and a stakeholders' conference amounting to just under £16,000. I expect any further costs associated with the conclusion of the consultation to fall within my Department's administration costs budgets.

University Student Placements

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the percentage of university students who undertook work experience and internships as part of their coursework in each of the last three school years. [16679]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information is shown in the table. Figures for 2004/05 will be available in December 2005.

UK domiciled undergraduates studying at English higher education institutions, on courses which involve work experience

	2001/02	*2002/03*	*2003/04*
Total number of undergraduates	1,204,040	1,512,770	1,548,315
Of which:			
Undertaking industrial placements[1]	20,920	21,905	22,230
Percentage undertaking industrial placement	1.7	1.4	1.4
Foundation degree[1]	2,715	10,025	19,375
Percentage on foundation degree	0.2	0.8	1.5

[1] A small number of students (around 30) were recorded as being on foundation degrees and on an industrial placement.

Notes:

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5. Percentages have been rounded to 1 decimal place.

2. Figures are on a whole year count basis, which counts students who are enrolled at any point in the academic year.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

In addition to those undergraduates whose course contains a period of work experience or an industrial placement, all foundation degree courses involve an element of work-based learning as an integral part of the course.

Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many and what proportion of 15-year-olds achieved one or more Part One General National Vocational Qualification at *(a)* Foundation and *(b)* Intermediate level in each year since 1995; [23452]

(2) how many and what proportion of 15-year-olds achieved one or more Full General National Vocational Qualification at *(a)* Foundation and *(b)* Intermediate level in each year since 1995. [23453]

Phil Hope: The information requested can be found in the following tables.

GNVQ achievements of 15-year-old pupils[1] in all schools

		Part 1 Intermediate GNVQ		Part 1 Foundation GNVQ	
	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1] (000)	Number (000)	Percentage	Number (000)	Percentage
2005[2]	637.2	1.4	0.2	0.0	0.0
2004	643.6	4.5	0.7	0.1	0.0
2003	622.1	45.0	7.2	8.8	1.4
2002	606.6	25.5	4.2	6.6	1.1
2001	603.3	14.6	2.4	3.6	0.6
2000	580.4	9.3	1.6	2.5	0.4
1999	581.0	7.2	1.2	2.3	0.4
1998	575.2	4.4	0.8	1.4	0.2
1997	586.8	1.9	0.3	0.8	0.1

		Full Intermediate GNVQ		Full Foundation GNVQ	
	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1] (000)	Number (000)	Percentage	Number (000)	Percentage
2005[2]	637.2	53.4	8.4	2.3	0.4
2004	643.6	44.0	6.8	2.6	0.4
2003	622.1	32.3	5.2	2.5	0.4
2002	606.6	11.0	1.8	1.4	0.2
2001	603.3	1.7	0.3	0.8	0.1
2000	580.4	1.2	0.2	1.0	0.2
1999	581.0	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.1
1998	575.2	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.1
1997	586.8	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.1

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional. All other figures are final.

HEALTH

Academic Medicine

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will take steps to encourage the entry of *(a)* women and *(b)* people from minority ethnic groups into academic medicine. [21187]

Mr. Byrne: Universities are expanding the number of opportunities for training in academic medicine. Entry to such training programmes is through fair and open competition in compliance with employment and European law.

Acute Care

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in Hertfordshire provide acute care; and if she will make a statement. [21409]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are four hospitals in Hertfordshire which provide acute care. They are Hemel Hempstead Hospital, Watford General Hospital, the Lister Hospital, Stevenage and Queen Elizabeth II in Welwyn Garden City.

Alliance Medical

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what categories of patient are not able to gain access to scanning services provided in mobile units provided by Alliance Medical; and if she will make a statement. [19074]

Mr. Byrne: The mobile scanning service provided by Alliance Medical uses scanners that are the same size as fixed units and is fully accessible, with, for example, lift access for patients who are unable to use the steps.

Ambulance Service Restructuring

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the likely level of cost savings arising from the proposed restructuring of the Ambulance Service. [19152]

Mr. Byrne: "Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services" set out how the range and quality of services provided to patients by ambulance services could and should be improved. The report recommended fewer, larger trusts so that they would have the capacity to deliver the changes required.

We expect efficiencies to be realised in management and administrative positions, headquarters and estates, and better use of resources, but it will be for the new trusts to calculate the level of efficiency savings to be made to offset transitional costs and to re-invest in local services for improving patient care.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the costs of re-organising the Ambulance Service in England. [21608]

Mr. Byrne: The size of these costs cannot be accurately estimated until public consultation has concluded, the number and boundaries of the new trusts are known, and key decisions have been taken by the new trusts on operational management arrangements and associated staffing structures. The new trusts, if established, will be expected to minimise transitional costs, and actively pursue future efficiencies which will offset any transitional costs.

Barnsley District General Hospital

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the projected costs are of redundancies planned at the Barnsley district general hospital. [20328]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the chair of the Barnsley district general hospital national health service foundation trust. I have written to Gordon Firth informing him of my hon. Friend's inquiry. He will reply shortly and a letter will be placed in the Library.

Beef

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations her Department has made to the European Commission on removing the EU requirement to remove the vertebral column from cattle over 24 months in connection with the lifting of the export ban on beef over 30 months of age; and what assessment she has made of the impact that an extended beef-on-the-bone ban would have on *(a)* small beef producers and *(b)* butchers' shops concentrating on the production of high quality local food. [22665]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The Food Standards Agency (FSA) lobbied and argued strongly for a threshold of 30 months, as currently applies in the United Kingdom. The FSA had commissioned an independent risk assessment which concluded that removal of vertebral column at 12 months rather than 30 months would make a negligible difference in diminishing the bovine spongiform encephalopathy risk in the UK. This report was passed to the European Commission as evidence that it would be disproportionate to require removal at 24 months and to other member states as part of the lobbying process. There was insufficient support from other member states for a European Union threshold of 30 months and one of 24 months was adopted.

Officials in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are currently leading a public consultation on lifting the export ban and harmonising specified risk material controls with those in other member states. A full assessment of the impact of requiring removal of vertebral column from cattle aged 24 to 30 months at slaughter will be completed at the end of the consultation, based on responses received and preliminary economic assessment work currently under way.

Body Mass Index

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it a requirement for general practitioners to ensure that the body mass index of each patient is regularly recorded as part of the new GP contract. [20327]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom health Ministers, are responsible for reviewing the general medical service contract with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee. Negotiators have confirmed some changes are likely to be made to the quality and outcomes framework from April 2006.

Brucella Viruses

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases involving humans becoming infected with the *(a) brucella melitensis* virus and *(b) brucella suis* virus have been reported to her Department in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [21551]

Caroline Flint: The number of cases of *Brucella melitensis* and *Brucella* species infection diagnosed in humans diagnosed in England and Wales in the past five years is shown in the following table.

Laboratory reports of brucella infection received by the Health Protection Agency—formerly the Public Health Laboratory Service

	Brucella melitensis[1]	*Brucella species*[2]
2000	4	1
2001	6	0
2002	7	0
2003	3	2
2004	9	1

[1] All cases of *Brucella Melitensis* are either acquired abroad, or result from the consumption of imported products made with unpasteurised milk.

[2] *Brucella* species identified by serology only.

Note:
No cases of *Brucella suis* have been reported in England and Wales since records began.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to assess the level of infection by *brucella* viruses within the UK population; and if she will make a statement. [21552]

Caroline Flint: *Brucellosis* is now a relatively rare human disease in England and Wales, following the successful campaign in the 1970s to eradicate *Brucella abortus* from cattle.

Veterinary surgeons and farm workers are the occupational groups who are at greatest risk of acquiring *brucellosis* in the United Kingdom, because of their close contact with farm animals.

A survey of farm workers in England was carried out between 1991 and 1996. A total of 404 farm workers were tested for *brucellosis*. Three, or 0.7 per cent. of them, all dairy farmers, had antibodies in their blood on enrolment into the study that indicated past infection with *Brucella species*[1]. All are likely to have acquired infection when the disease was more prevalent in cattle. All of them drank unpasteurised milk on their farms. No new infections were observed during the study.

[1] Reference: Thomas D Rh, Salmon RL. Zoonotic illness in farm workers and their families: clinical presentation and extent: a prospective collaborative study.
1997; Health and Safety Executive Commissioned Research Project Number: I/HPD/126/308/90.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *brucellosis* have been recorded by the NHS in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [21553]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Brucellosis is now a relatively rare human disease in England, following the successful campaign in the 1970s to eradicate *Brucella abortus* from cattle.

Count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) with primary diagnosis brucellosis. Data for all national health service hospitals in England, data years 1999–2000 to 2000–04

	FCEs
1999–2000	10
2000–01	15
2001–02	7
2002–03	12
2003–04	19

Note:
A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. The figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within a year.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to ensure that testing for suspected cases of *brucellosis* can be carried out; and if she will make a statement. [21554]

Caroline Flint: Doctors treating a febrile patient who lives in an overseas area or who has travelled to a country where *brucellosis* is endemic will be aware of the possibility of infection with *brucella.*

A preliminary test is available for rapid screening, which is used in many laboratories.

The *brucella* reference unit (BRU), which is based at University Hospital Aintree[1], carries out laboratory tests to diagnose suspected cases of *brucellosis.* The BRU carries out tests that detect the presence of antibodies in serum—these tests can be used to confirm current or past infection, but cannot be used to determine the species that caused the infection.

The statutory and exotic bacteria department of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency[2] carries out tests in which the organism is grown from samples of blood or and or bone marrow. These tests can determine which species of *brucella* is causing the infection. The Department also carries out biotyping of *brucella* strains, which helps to identify the possible source(s) of infection. This service is funded by the Health Protection Agency.

[1] Lower Lane, Liverpool L9 7AL

[2] Weybridge, Surrey KT15 3NB

Budget Deficits (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the deficit or surplus of each NHS trust in Oxfordshire was for 2004–05; what methodology was used to calculate the outturn; and what action she expects trusts to take to tackle deficits. [20393]

Caroline Flint: Audited information in respect of the 2004–05 financial position of all strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and national health service trusts was published in their individual annual accounts in September. We have no plans to publish unaudited information.

The NHS is in receipt of record resources as a result of the Government's policy on funding in the NHS. Funding of the NHS has increased from £34.7 billion in 1997–98 to £69.7 billion in 2004–05. By 2007–08 spending on the NHS will have increased to over £92 billion. With this level of investment all NHS bodies should be able to plan for and achieve financial balance, each and every year.

The Department has no plans to provide additional funding. Any recovery plans developed by the organisations must address the issue of deficits, and the making good of these in future years.

Cancelled Operations

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancelled operations there have been in each primary care trust in London in each quarter in the last four years. [21717]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold data by primary care trust. However, trust data are available on the following website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/cancelled_operations.htm.

Cervical Cancer

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list health trusts where liquid-based cytology *(a)* has been and *(b)* has not been introduced for testing of cervical smears in all areas in England; and if she will make a statement. [21778]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence published its appraisal of liquid based cytology (LBC) in October 2003, the following hospitals have introduced LBC for cervical screening:

Royal Hallamshire Hospital (Sheffield)
Royal Victoria Infirmary (Newcastle)
North Tyneside District General
Birmingham Women's Healthcare
County Hospital Hereford
The Royal London Hospital
Northwick Park Hospital (Middlesex)
Partnership Pathology Services—Guildford
Southmead Hospital (Bristol)
Musgrove Park Hospital (Taunton)
Norfolk and Norwich Hospital
Addenbrookes Hospital (Cambridge)
West Suffolk Hospital (Bury St. Edmunds)
Royal Liverpool Hospital
University Hospital Aintree
Warrington Hospital
Arrowe Park Hospital (Wirral)
Whiston Hospital (Merseyside)
Leighton Hospital (Crewe)
Macclesfield District Hospital
Countess of Chester Hospital
Blackburn Royal Infirmary
Burnley General Hospital
Chorley and District Hospital
Royal Lancaster Infirmary
Southport General Infirmary
Victoria Hospital (Blackpool)
Birch Hill Hospital (Rochdale)
Bury General Hospital
Manchester Cytology Centre

Royal Bolton Hospital
Royal Oldham Hospital
Stepping Hill Hospital (Stockport)
Tameside General Hospital (Lancashire)

The following hospitals plan to introduce LBC for cervical screening by March 2006:

Scunthorpe General Hospital
York District Hospital
Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital (Grimsby)
Doncaster Royal Infirmary
Leeds Teaching Hospitals
Calderdale Royal (Halifax)
Kettering General Hospital
Leicester Royal Infirmary
Northampton General Hospital
Chesterfield and North Derby Royal
Derbyshire Royal Infirmary
Kings Mill Hospital (Mansfield)
Nottingham City Hospital
Pilgrim Hospital (Boston)
Lincoln County Hospital
Good Hope Hospital (Sutton Coldfield)
Princess Royal Trust (Telford)
Chase Farm Hospital (Enfield)
University College Hospital (London)
Ealing Hospital
Hammersmith Hospitals
Queen Mary's Hospital (Sidcup)
St. Thomas's Hospital (London)
Kingston Hospital
St. Hellier Hospital (Surrey)
Darent Valley Hospital (Dartford)
Medway Maritime
Pembury Hospital (Tunbridge Wells)
Preston Hall (Mid-Kent Healthcare)
William Harvey Hospital (Ashford)
Epsom General Hospital
Cheltenham General Hospital
Gloucestershire Royal Hospital
Derriford Hospital (Plymouth)
Royal Cornwall Hospital (Treliske)
Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital
Torbay Hospital

Source:
NHS Cancer Screening Programmes

Congenital Heart Conditions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many units dedicated to Grown-Up Congenital Heart patients there are in each NHS trust area; what plans she has to increase this number; and if she will make a statement. [16509]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are 15 national health service trusts providing specialist services to adolescents and adults with congenital heart disease.

There are no plans to increase the number of specialist units.

The Government will be publishing a guide for commissioners later this year to assist the NHS with planning and commissioning to meet the needs of grown ups with congenital heart disease. The guide also sets out what patients should expect of services.

Correspondence

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Banbury of 13 September on community health. [20416]

Mr. Byrne: My noble Friend, the Minister of State for National Health Service delivery responded to the hon. Member's letter on 17 October 2005.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to correspondence from members of the public; [21914]

(2) what steps she is taking to improve the Department's performance in replying to hon. Members' correspondence. [21915]

Jane Kennedy: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in "Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments". The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

Information relating to the performance of Departments in replying to hon. Members and Peers' correspondence is published on an annual basis. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS.

The establishment of the customer service centre and the extra attention and resources directed to this important part of the Department's work have resulted in a considerable improvement both in the timeliness and in the quality of responses. Recent figures show that the Department is now one of the top performers in Government, with more than 90 per cent. of all letters from hon. Members and Peers answered within the Whitehall standard of 20 working days.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to lay before the House the *(a)* national health service (dental charges) regulations 2006, *(b)* national health service (general dental services contracts) regulations 2006 and *(c)* national health service (personal dental services arrangements) regulations 2006. [23277]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* We expect to lay all three sets of regulations before Parliament by the end of 2005.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to appoint a new chief dental officer; and what the recruitment process will be. [23278]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The Department is currently considering the timetable for recruiting a new chief dental officer. The recruitment process will follow the usual Department procedures when recruiting externally. Barry Cockcroft, the deputy chief dental officer, is currently acting chief dental officer for England.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons new personal dental service (PDS) arrangements are being introduced under the draft new general dental services contract; and whether dentists applying for the previous PDS contract were informed that they would have to renegotiate it for a new one in 2006. [23280]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The new personal dental services (PDS) agreements will be introduced under the proposed national health service (personal dental services agreements) regulations. Separate but similar regulations, the proposed national health service (general dental services contracts) regulations will govern general dental services.

The new PDS regulations enable the current pilot PDS arrangements to be made permanent and a matter for local rather than national negotiation. They will also enable the proposed new three band system of patient charges to apply in PDS.

Dentists previously entering PDS agreements were made aware that these were pilot agreements.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what a unit of dental activity refers to in the context of dental services contracts; and how this differs from the previous fee per item way of working for general dental practitioners. [23281]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* 'Units of dental activity' refers to courses of treatment weighted into three bands to reflect their relative average complexity. Units of dental activity will make up the overall activity level required by an individual dental contractor in return for an agreed annual contract value, to be agreed between the dentist and the primary care trust.

The proposed new banded dental charges system will provide the basis for monitoring activity under general dental service (GDS) contracts and personal dental service (PDS) agreements in terms of banded courses of treatment. Where a banded course of treatment is provided, the contractor will provide the number of units of dental activity set out in table 1. In the case of a charge exempt course of treatment, the contractor will provide the number of units of dental activity specified in table 2.

Table 1: Units of dental activity provided under the contract in respect of banded courses of treatment

Type of course of treatment	*Units of dental activity provided*
Band 1 course of treatment (excluding urgent treatment)	1.0
Band 1 course of treatment (urgent treatment only)	1.2
Band 2 course of treatment	3.0
Band 3 course of treatment	12.0

Table 2: Units of dental activity provided under the contract in respect of charge exempt courses of treatment

Type of charge exempt course of treatment	*Units of dental activity provided*
Issue of a prescription	0.75
Repair of a dental appliance (denture)	1.0
Repair of a dental appliance (bridge)	1.2
Removal of sutures	1.0
Arrest of bleeding	1.2

The new system will differ from the current fee per item system, where dentists' remuneration is based on each individual treatment—a filling, a crown, etc. The evidence of PDS pilots, where remuneration is not based on fee per item, is that dentists provide fewer and simpler interventions within each course of treatment. This allows dentists to spend more time with patients, adopt a more preventive approach to patient care and better manage their work load.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of dentists offering root canal and other specialist treatment on the NHS. [21809]

Ms Rosie Winterton: National health service dentists are able to undertake root canal treatment under existing regulations and will continue to be able to provide the treatment under the new contractual arrangements from 1 April 2006.

In May 2004, we announced proposals for implementing a scheme for dentists with special interests initially in minor oral surgery, orthodontics, endodontics and periodontics. Under this scheme, which will shortly be finalised, primary care trusts will be able to contract with dentists who have acquired skills in these specialised areas. This should provide a basis for increasing the availability of specialist treatment in a primary care setting.

Departmental Estate

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which parts of her Department's estate will not be covered by the commitments set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. [22101]

Caroline Flint: The requirements of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate cover all departmental buildings. However, in line with guidance provided as part of the framework, activity is focused on principal buildings where the Department has control of facilities.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of her Department. [21115]

Jane Kennedy: An online assessment tool has been provided for staff to assess their literacy and numeracy skills and needs. The Department's intranet offers guidance on ways to improve basic skills and the open learning centre provides materials on grammar,

punctuation, spelling and working with numbers. The Department also provides day release for all staff studying to improve their basic skills.

Departmental Vehicles

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what reduction there has been in *(a)* road transport vehicle carbon dioxide emissions and *(b)* single occupancy car commuting from her Department against a baseline year of (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [22102]

Caroline Flint: The Department uses a number of options for the provision of vehicles, which are not administered by the Department directly. We therefore currently have no direct information on carbon dioxide emissions. However, a programme to install video conferencing facilities in many of the Department's buildings has reduced the need for official travel.

We do not have any means of calculating single occupancy commuting. However, we have gradually reduced the number of car parking spaces available in staff car parks, in many instances replacing them with cycle racks. We are also investigating the possibility of introducing a car sharing scheme in our Leeds office.

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 which *(a)* have been and *(b)* have not been implemented. [20785]

Mr. Byrne: The years since 1986 have seen various initiatives and policy developments to advocacy and it is not clear that the 1986 Act as drafted would provide the best framework for advocacy services. For example, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 creates a new safeguard, the independent mental capacity advocate service. This will give extra protection to the most vulnerable people who lack capacity.

In March 2005, a review by the National Director of Learning Disabilities showed that there have been improvements in self-advocacy for people with learning disabilities and more councils are giving money to self-advocacy.

European Medicines Evaluation Agency

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time taken by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency was to approve a cancer drug for formal marketing approval is in the last year for which figures are available. [20993]

Jane Kennedy: The European Medicines Agency publishes procedural details for each new product authorised through the Centralised procedure and approved for marketing by the European Commission.

For anti-cancer drugs, figures are available for the most recent full year period from January 2004 to January 2005. These show an average time of 122 days from start of the approval procedure to the preliminary opinion of the scientific committee. This is then followed by an average of 70 days for the scientific committee to evaluate any additional data needed and agree a positive opinion on the application. The final administrative steps prior to the issue of the European Commission's marketing authorisation have taken on average 91 days. These steps include the opportunity for Member States to make observations on the draft decision of the commission.

A revised European Regulation coming into force in November 2005 now requires considerably shorter times for these final administrative steps. This was one of the responses by the European Parliament to criticisms raised during the review of medicines legislation in Europe.

Foundation Hospitals

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether any foundation hospitals are in Hertfordshire; [21407]

(2) whether she plans to make Hemel Hempstead Hospital a foundation hospital; and if she will make a statement. [21408]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no national health service foundation trusts in Hertfordshire. However, Bedford Hospital NHS trust is currently applying for foundation status. Subject to receiving the Secretary of State's support, Bedford Trust will be able to make an application to Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts, for consideration for authorisation next year.

Hemel Hempstead Hospital is part of West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS trust which is a one star organisation and therefore has not been invited to apply for foundation status. We are committed to ensuring that all trusts should have the opportunity to apply for foundation status and are engaged with Monitor and strategic health authorities on a diagnostic programme to determine the state of readiness of all NHS acute trusts for foundation status.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the administration costs of maintaining foundation status *(a)* in total for the NHS in England and *(b)* for each foundation trust. [18902]

Mr. Byrne: Neither the Department nor Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of national health service foundation trusts, hold this information. Administrative costs will vary between NHS foundation trusts. The accounts of the 31 NHS foundation trusts authorised in 2004–05 were laid before Parliament in July 2005, copies of which are available in the Library.

General Medical Services Contract

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the outcome of the review of the quality and outcomes framework of the general medical services contract will be announced; and if she will make a statement. [19399]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom health Ministers, is currently discussing with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee

revisions to the existing general medical services contract, from April 2006 including changes to the quality and outcomes framework from April 2006. As part of this, an expert panel was engaged by NHS Employers to consider independently the evidence for any new clinical indicator within the quality and outcomes framework. That advice is informing negotiations. An announcement on changes to the current contract that will apply from April 2006 will be made at the end of the negotiating process, and once approved by the respective UK health Ministers. This is intended to be later in the year.

Health Improvement and Protection Bill

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish the Health Improvement and Protection Bill. [21718]

Caroline Flint: The Health Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 27 October 2005. The Bill was published on the same day.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date her response to the consultation on the smoke free elements of the Health Improvement and Protection Bill will be published. [18070]

Caroline Flint: We intend to publish a summary of the responses to the consultation on the smoke free elements of the Health Bill shortly. Copies will be placed in the Library.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is planning to maximise detection of hepatitis C within the population. [20724]

Caroline Flint: The hepatitis C action plan for England, July 2004, sets out a framework of key actions to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C. It highlights the need to raise awareness of hepatitis C in order to increase diagnosis.

As part of implementation of the action plan, the Department launched hepatitis C awareness campaigns for health care professionals and the public in 2004. These campaigns have so far included:

the distribution of a hepatitis C information pack to all general practitioners and practice nurses and other key health care professionals in England, which includes guidance on hepatitis C testing;

a new national health service hepatitis C awareness website—www.hepc.nhs.uk;

a new national hepatitis C freephone information line (0800 451451);

features in health care professional journals, regional/national newspapers and consumer magazines;

an innovative photography exhibition of portraits of people with hepatitis C which is touring regional cities using local patient case studies; and

a health promotion resource for young offenders which will be launched in November 2005.

The National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse have introduced from 1 April 2005 a system for monitoring the frequency of hepatitis C testing of injecting drug users receiving drug treatment.

Herceptin

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with countries which have already approved Herceptin on the effectiveness of the drug against early stage breast cancer. [20990]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Contact is being made by officials with Slovenia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, the United States of America and Canada to investigate the position of those countries on the prescribing of Herceptin.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the outcome was of meetings with the National Cancer Director Professor and the medical directors of NHS cancer networks with regard to offering HER2 testing for the suitability of Herceptin to all women diagnosed with early breast cancer. [21964]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The outcome of the meeting between Professor Mike Richards and medical directors of national health service cancer networks was that each of the 34 cancer networks would submit action plans to the Department by 4 November 2005 on how they will implement HER2 testing.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost per patient is *(a)* of using Herceptin for the treatment of breast cancer and *(b)* of the treatment of the recurrence of HER2 breast cancer. [22172]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of Herceptin for the treatment of breast cancer is estimated to be around £20,000 per patient per year. Estimates of the cost of the treatment of the recurrence of HER2 breast cancer are not available due to the complexity of treating advanced disease and the different treatment options available.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of patients who would benefit from the use of Herceptin. [22173]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is estimated that around 5,000 women a year who are diagnosed with early stage breast cancer will be HER2 positive and therefore suitable for treatment with Herceptin.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the role of the reserve forces in a pandemic. [23177]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

There is no specific pre-planned role for the armed forces in the event of a pandemic. In any urgent and extreme circumstances we would consider requests for the provision of military aid to the civil authorities, submitted in the normal way, which could be provided by drawing on regular or reserve personnel.

Intensive Care Beds

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intensive care beds were available on average in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average occupancy rates were. [22181]

Mr. Byrne: The latest data available is for 2004–05. On average, there were 5,223 beds available in wards classified as intensive care in England. The occupancy rate was 78.2 per cent.

Intensive Therapy

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in Hertfordshire have intensive therapy unit facilities; and if she will make a statement. [21406]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are two national health service trusts in Hertfordshire, East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, that provide beds in wards classified as intensive care: neonates, intensive care: paediatrics/or intensive care: wholly or mainly adult in 2004–05. There are no data available at hospital level. Data are not available on an intensive care units basis.

Intermediate Care

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intermediate care *(a)* beds and *(b)* supported places there are in England; how many older people have used them in each year since 2002; and if she will make a statement. [21410]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the data collected centrally, which do not distinguish by age of service user.

	Number of "places" in non-residential intermediate care schemes	*Number of intermediate care beds*	*Number of people using intermediate care*
2002–03	19,078	7,493	284,365
2003–04	17,339	8,697	333,821
2004–05	20,558	8,928	362,664

Source:
Statistical summary to the chief executive's report to the national health service—13 May 2005.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intermediate care beds will be funded from the £66 million allocated for 2002–03 and 2003–04 in each strategic health authority; and if she will make a statement. [21411]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Numbers of intermediate care beds and places

	2002–03		*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
Strategic health authority	*Intermediate care beds*	*Places in non-residential intermediate care schemes*	*Intermediate care beds*	*Places in non-residential intermediate care schemes*	*Intermediate care beds*	*Places in non-residential intermediate care schemes*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	408	1,113	358	829	333	788
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	188	416	254	612	260	972
Essex	264	2,494	376	1,007	367	714
North West London	141	545	92	546	108	919
North Central London	308	169	296	846	296	1,033
North East London	117	351	107	381	140	693
South East London	121	392	179	346	179	274
South West London	142	179	192	197	191	247
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	251	759	222	665	222	625
County Durham and Tees Valley	47	339	59	455	62	547
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	119	914	136	466	170	723
West Yorkshire	260	1,478	333	644	334	1,214
Cumbria and Lancashire	126	601	174	561	127	526
Greater Manchester	429	675	498	765	477	849
Cheshire and Merseyside	263	231	328	377	343	436
Thames Valley	260	439	297	471	332	499
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	510	429	533	469	559	525
Kent and Medway	310	678	397	625	450	880
Surrey and Sussex	387	2,305	676	1,414	745	1,715
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	463	978	423	1,486	328	2,207
South West Peninsula	157	583	237	486	249	476
Somerset and Dorset	246	757	278	1,154	272	961
South Yorkshire	404	831	439	793	423	812
Trent	569	431	616	438	577	439
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	252	223	322	344	419	532
Shropshire and Staffordshire	97	132	100	188	148	248
Birmingham and the Black Country	380	480	402	531	411	353
West Midlands, South	275	155	373	244	407	351
Total England	7,493	19,078	8,697	17,339	8,928	20,558

Source:
Local delivery plan return, fourth quarter in each year.

Junior Doctors

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to effect the transition between the present career structure for junior doctors and the changes outlined in Modernising Medical Careers; [19678]

(2) what assessment she has made of the implications for the career prospects of junior doctors of her proposal to phase out senior house officer posts in the national health service. [19679]

Mr. Byrne: All aspects of the implementation of modernising medical careers (MMC) are governed through the following structures.

The MMC United Kingdom strategy group, attended by the four UK chief medical officers, sets the strategic direction. Implementation in England is managed through the MMC programme delivery board. Input from a wide range of stakeholders is obtained through the MMC UK advisory board. There is also close working with individual stakeholders to manage different aspects of the process.

These bodies are currently developing and assessing the structure of specialist and general practitioner training, following the introduction of foundation programmes in August this year. Their work encompasses career structures and career prospects for junior doctors. Current senior house officers will not be disadvantaged in the new training system and MMC will be working closely with the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board and Medical Royal Colleges to ensure that all are treated fairly.

Lupus

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated for research into *(a)* systemic lupus and *(b)* discoid lupus in 2005–06; and what steps are being taken to increase awareness of these conditions among medical professionals. [22087]

Mr. Byrne: It is not possible to provide data on research funding for lupus in 2005–06.

The main part of the Department's expenditure on health research is allocated to, and managed by, national health service organisations. Details of individual projects supported in the NHS, including a significant number concerned with lupus, are to be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research. The Medical Research Council (MRC), an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology, also funds medical research.

We intend that the musculoskeletal framework, a best practice guide to supporting people with musculoskeletal conditions, will be published later this year. This publication will do much to raise awareness amongst health professionals and the general public for all musculoskeletal conditions, including lupus.

Medical Staff (Training Costs)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost was of training each *(a)* doctor, *(b)* nurse and *(c)* physiotherapist for the entire period between entering onto a degree or diploma course until full registration, inclusive of tuition, bursary and salary support costs in the last period for which figures are available. [19130]

Mr. Byrne: Information for England on the average cost of training each nurse and physiotherapist for the entire period between entering onto a degree or diploma course until full registration, inclusive of tuition, bursary and salary support costs is shown in the table.

Average cost of training for each nurse and physiotherapist, 2004–05

Staff group	*2004–05 cost (£)*
Nurse Diploma (bursaried)	39,290
Nurse Degree (bursaried)	27,390
Nurse Secondee (salaried)	59,760
Physiotherapist	28,580

Source:
Financial and Workforce Information Return (FWIR) November 2004 and NHS Student Grant Unit for Nurse and Physiotherapists

In the period between entry to medical school and full registration, it is estimated that training a doctor costs between £200,000 and £250,000. Doctors generally continue training after full registration. As the duration and nature of post-registration training varies greatly and as service and training costs are closely related it is not possible to provide a meaningful estimate of the total cost of training.

Medical Staff (Numbers)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were per head of population in (i) England and (ii) each strategic health authority in each year since 1995. [20704]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mental Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* objectives, *(b)* budget, *(c)* locations and *(d)* evaluation methodology are for the independent mental capacity advocate pilots. [22374]

Mr. Byrne: The objectives of the Independent Mental Capacity Act (IMCA) pilots are to test how this new service will work, in advance of it becoming a national requirement in April 2007. The pilot will test different ways of setting up this service—for example with full time IMCA advocates and with sessional advocates. It will test referral systems, systems for recording and systems for monitoring. The outcome will be good practice guidance which will be useful both for the commissioners of this service when it becomes a national requirement and also for the future IMCA advocacy providers, many of whom may be small and will benefit from the good practice guide.

The budget for the pilots is £500,000. Pilots will take place in Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Croydon, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Merseyside, Newcastle, and Southwark. An evaluation will be by an external researcher who will work with the advocacy organisations to develop protocols such as monitoring systems and reflective diaries.

National School Fruit Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of fruit supplied to schools under the National School Fruit Scheme was sourced from *(a)* suppliers within 25 miles of the school supplied, *(b)* national suppliers and *(c)* overseas suppliers in the period September 2004 to September 2005. [21878]

Caroline Flint: There are currently 15 United Kingdom based suppliers that supply eight different types of fruit and vegetables across the country. No overseas suppliers are participating in the school fruit and vegetable scheme.

We do not collect information about the distance of suppliers in relation to the schools they supply.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many schools are participating in the National School Fruit Scheme; and how many deliveries are made per week to these schools. [21881]

Caroline Flint: As at 14 October 2005, 16,413 schools across England were participating in the school fruit and vegetable scheme.

Although some distributors involved in the scheme make a delivery three times a week, the most common arrangement is a delivery every other school day, which equates to five deliveries per fortnight.

NHS Employees

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many employees aged over 70 years are working in the national health service. [19990]

Mr. Byrne: At 30 September 2004, 834 national health service staff working in England were aged 70 and over.

NHS Finance

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of NHS trusts in Brighton and West Sussex. [21831]

Caroline Flint: The latest available data on the financial position of national health service trusts are for 2004–05. The table shows the 2004–05 financial position reported by NHS trusts in Brighton and West Sussex.

Organisation	*2004–05 deficit/ surplus (£000)*
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	–10,035
The Royal West Sussex NHS Trust	–15,483
South Downs Health NHS Trust	69
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	–30,657
Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	298
West Sussex Health and Social Care NHS Trust	34
Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust	51

Source:
2004–05 summarisation schedules.

The strategic health authority continues to work closely with NHS organisations in Brighton and West Sussex to achieve the year-end position agreed with the Department.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the latest aggregate *(a)* year-to-date and *(b)* forecast year-end financial positions are of all NHS organisations in England which have been received from strategic health authorities by her Department. [21413]

Mr. Byrne: The latest year for which audited financial information is available is 2004–05. The information requested has been placed in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website.

The Department does not publish unaudited information on the financial position of national health service organisations.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her latest estimate is of the outturn against planned expenditure for 2005–06 of *(a)* the Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust and *(b)* Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust. [21419]

Mr. Byrne: The latest data available on the financial position of national health service organisations (strategic health authority, primary care trust and NHS trusts) are for 2004–05.

The 2004–05 financial position for Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust showed they had a deficit of £1.7 million and the 2004–05 financial position for Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust showed they had a surplus of £183,000.

NHS Pension Scheme

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women doctors contributed to the NHS pension scheme between 1972 and 1988; and what contributions were made by *(a)* men and *(b)* women to the scheme between those dates, expressed as a percentage of salary. [21256]

Mr. Byrne: Data on women doctors who contributed to the national health service pension scheme between 1972 and 1988 are not held in the format requested.

The contribution rate for all doctors, male and female is the same at 6 per cent. of NHS pensionable pay.

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the spouses of male and female members of the NHS pension scheme, both contributing the same amounts to the scheme between 1972 and 1988, are entitled to the same pension following the death of their spouse. [21257]

Mr. Byrne: The spouses of male and female members of the national health service pension scheme are entitled to the same initial pension for three months and up to six months following the death of their spouse. Thereafter a widow is entitled to a pension equal to one half of her husband's pension based on his total scheme membership; a widower is entitled to a pension equal to one half of his wife's scheme membership from 6 April 1988.

NHS Professionals

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of NHS Professionals; and if she will make a statement. [21796]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Professionals is playing a useful part in securing the appropriate and effective use of temporary staff and reducing national health service expenditure on private agency staff. A recent independent report recorded that agency spending fell "for the first time in recent memory" in 2003–04.

Obesity

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish proposals submitted for new obesity indicators by her Department to the quality and outcomes framework review. [21095]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, Moorlands (Charlotte Atkins) today.

Pressure Sores

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS of pressure sores. [22317]

Mr. Byrne: From the information held centrally, it is not possible to separately identify the costs, in hospitals and all other settings where the national health service cares for patients, of treating pressure sores.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts are in deficit; and how many of these deficits are due to annual private finance initiative charges. [17865]

Mr. Byrne: Data from the summarised final accounts for 2004–05 show that of the 66 national health service trusts that had a financial deficit, only nine have an operational private finance initiative scheme.

Psychiatric Trainees

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of psychiatric trainees undergoing psychotherapy training in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [20666]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested for England at 30 September each year is shown in the following table.

Full-time equivalents

	Doctors in training Psychiatry group total	*Psychotherapy*
2000	2,824	42
2001	2,801	42
2002	2,918	45
2003	3,017	36
2004	3,470	47

Source:
National health service Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental work force census.

In order to obtain a psychiatry group specialist registrar post, all candidates must have undertaken some training in psychotherapy.

As at March 2005, the number of consultant psychotherapists was 112 and as at September 2004, the number of other qualified psychotherapy staff was 723.

Residential Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how frequently the needs of residents in *(a)* residential and *(b)* nursing homes are assessed; and how such assessments are triggered. [22267]

Mr. Byrne: The Care Homes Regulations 2001, Section 14 (2) of the regulations, requires the registered provider to ensure that assessment needs of residents in residential and nursing homes are kept under review and revised at any time when it is necessary to do so, having regard to any change in circumstances.

Self-funded Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how a person who is self-funding their care is able to obtain *(a)* a care plan and *(b)* regular reviews of their (i) health and (ii) social care needs. [22266]

Mr. Byrne: An individual's financial circumstances should have no bearing on whether or not a council carries out an assessment of their need for community care services. Once an individual's care needs have been assessed and a decision made about the care, if any, to be provided, an assessment of their ability to pay charges up to the full cost of that care should be carried out.

Where a local authority is providing care services, whether paid for or not, guidance requires the person's need for those services to be kept under review.

Where a person has made their own arrangements to be in a care home or receive personal care from a domiciliary care agency regulations require the person registered in respect of the care home or agency to prepare a written plan of the service user's needs and to keep it under review.

National health service nursing care is provided free in all settings.

Smoking

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to prohibit smoking in secure mental health units; and if she will make a statement. [24093]

Caroline Flint: The Health Bill was published on Thursday 27 October 2005 and contains proposals for smoke free enclosed public places and workplaces. Smoking will end in enclosed public places and workplaces from the summer of 2007 with some exemptions which would include some mental health establishments.

This is in line with the commitment in the Choosing Health White Paper for the national health service to be completely smoke free by the end of 2006 in which we recognise that in some cases, such as mental hospitals where for some patients the hospital may be their main place of residence and therefore their home, this may not be achievable.

Strokes

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that national effective protocols and training are in place for *(a)* ambulance staff and *(b)* staff in accident and emergency departments to ensure that they can identify patients who have had a stroke and refer them for the most effective treatment. [21497]

Mr. Byrne: Standard five of the national service framework for older people provides a programme of action to ensure that those who have had a stroke have prompt access to integrated stroke care services. As part of this, it sets out the importance of making a rapid diagnosis in improving patient outcomes.

All United Kingdom ambulance services currently use National clinical guidelines developed by the joint Royal Colleges ambulance liaison committee (JRCALC), that include the recognition, assessment and management of stroke /cerebral bleeds.

Many PCTs have agreed local arrangements with ambulance services, which ensure that once an ambulance crew has made the diagnosis of stroke, the patient is transferred directly into an acute stroke unit. The joint ASA/JRCALC clinical effectiveness committee published the "ACT NOW" expert report on 'joined-up' stroke services in June 2004. The report shares best practice in acute stroke management within emergency medical services and relevant hospital departments and gives examples of pathways to optimise co-ordination between disciplines. The Department's stroke strategy group will be looking at ways to share best practice guidance to encourage more trusts to adopt this approach where appropriate.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy that anyone suffering a transient ischaemic attack should see a stroke specialist within seven days. [21498]

Mr. Byrne: Standard five of the national service framework (NSF) for older people, published in March 2001, provides a programme of actions to reduce the incidence of transient ischaemic attack (TIA) and stroke in the population and ensure that those who have had a TIA or stroke have prompt access to integrated stroke care services. More patients are being seen by stroke specialists and stroke mortality is declining.

The quality and outcomes framework incentivises general practitioners through their contract payments to refer patients with a suspected TIA or stroke for a computed tomography or magnetic resonance imaging scan.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that all stroke patients receive a brain scan within 48 hours of having a stroke. [21499]

Mr. Byrne: Standard five of the national service framework (NSF) for older people, published in March 2001, provides a programme of actions to reduce the incidence of stroke in the population and ensure that those who have had a stroke have prompt access to integrated stroke care services. More patients are being seen by stroke specialists and stroke mortality is declining.

Included within standard five is a guideline stating that,

> "immediate management to improve chances of survival and minimise the risk of complications should include a brain scan within 48 hours".

The Department is currently working up a framework to ensure scanning services can be deployed quickly and appropriately.

Suicide

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to reduce the rate of suicide amongst people over the age of 75; [22319]

(2) what funding was allocated to work aimed at prevention of suicide in older people in the last year for which figures are available. [22320]

Mr. Byrne: The 2004 suicide prevention strategy annual report of progress sets out the actions that are underway to reduce the number of suicides in the general population, including older people. Although there are no specific actions targeting people 75-years or over, many of the measures in place will help prevent suicides amongst all age groups. Consequently, it is not possible to specify the amount of funding allocated to the prevention of suicide in older people.

The our healthier nation target is to reduce the overall death rate from suicide and undetermined injury from a baseline rate of 9.2 deaths per 100,000 population in 1995–97 to 7.3 deaths per 100,000 population in 2009–11. The latest available data for the three years 2002–4 show a rate of 8.6 deaths per 100,000 population; a reduction of 6.6 percent., from the baseline. The latest data for older people, 65 and over, show that this rate has fallen from a baseline rate of 10.0 deaths per 100,000 population to 9.0 deaths, a fall of 9.7 percent., over the period. For the 75 and over age group, the rate has fallen from a baseline rate of 11.5 deaths per 100,000 population to 10.3 deaths, a fall of 11.2 percent., over the period.

Sunflower Oil

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has evaluated on the health impact of the use of high oleic sunflower oil for frying potato crisps. [21561]

Caroline Flint: The health impact of high oleic sunflower oil for frying potato crisps has not been specifically evaluated. The Food Standards Agency is currently funding a large intervention study investigating the impact of replacing saturated fat with different amounts of monounsaturated fat, such as oleic acid in sunflower oil, on cardiovascular disease risk. Results from this study will be available in January 2008.

Technology Appraisal

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on proposals submitted to the Department in September by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in relation to developing a more rapid process for the appraisal of technologies. [22134]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made today.

Tonsil/Adenoid Removals

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many children aged under 16 years in each strategic health authority area were discharged from hospital after removal of tonsils or adenoids in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what the discharge rate was per 10,000 children aged under 16 years in each strategic health authority area; [20193]

(2) how many children aged under 16 years in each strategic health authority area had an operation to remove tonsils or adenoids without parental knowledge or consent in the most recent year for which figures are available. [20194]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows the number of children aged under 16 years who were discharged from national health service hospitals in England following tonsil and/or adenoid operations and the discharge rates per 10,000 children aged under 16 years, by residence in each strategic health authority (SHA) during 2003–04.

Information on parental knowledge, or consent for these procedures is not collected centrally.

Tonsil and adenoid operations and discharge rates per 10,000 children aged under 16 years, by residence in each SHA: 2003–04

SHA of residence	*In-year discharge episodes*	*Rates per 10,000 0—15 years population*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	1,491	35.6
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	1,563	46.6
Essex	1,816	56.2
North West London	1,085	32.8
North Central London	905	38.8
North East London	1,406	42.2
South East London	1,226	40.9
South West London	888	35.9
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	1,033	40.3
County Durham and Tees Valley	870	38.9
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	1,256	40.4
West Yorkshire	2,312	53.5
Cumbria and Lancashire	1,689	44.9
Greater Manchester	3,028	58.9
Cheshire and Merseyside	1,814	39.5
Thames Valley	1,553	36.1
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1,148	33.6
Kent and Medway	1,661	50.8
Surrey and Sussex	2,088	43.1
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	1,437	33.9
South West Peninsula	1,338	46.4
Dorset and Somerset	695	31.7
South Yorkshire	1,020	41.2
Trent	2,050	40.4
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	1,546	48.4
Shropshire and Staffordshire	1,500	51.9
Birmingham and the Black Country	2,064	42.5
West Midlands, South	819	27.5

Sources:

Hospital episode statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Count of in-year discharge episodes: all operations count of episodes, tonsil and adenoid operations (OPCS-4 = E20 and F34). Age at start of episode = under 16: NHS hospitals in England, 2003–04. Population data: 2001 census-based resident population estimates for 2004.

West Suffolk NHS Hospital Trust

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the financial outturn was at West Suffolk NHS hospital trust *(a)* at its inception and *(b)* in every year since its inception. [21352]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table. Information relating to the years prior to 1997–98 is not available.

West Suffolk hospitals national health service trust, retained surplus/(deficit) for the year

£000

	Retained surplus/(deficit)
1997–98	(32)
1998–99	28
1999–2000	(286)
2000–01	290
2001–02	(936)
2002–03	947
2003–04	(2,501)
2004–05	(7,638)

Source:

Audited summarisation schedules of the West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the debt inherited by Suffolk West primary care trust was at its inception; and what the financial outturn has been in every year since. [21353]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Suffolk West primary care trust, under/(over) spend against revenue resource limit

	Spend (£000)
2002–03	(1,581)
2003–04	(4,423)
2004–05	(12,510)

Source:

Audited summarisation schedules of the Suffolk West Primary Care Trust.

West Sussex Primary Care Trusts

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what savings she anticipates if the proposed merger of the five West Sussex primary care trusts proceeds. [18812]

Caroline Flint: The national health service will save £250 million in the cost of management and administration by 2008. The £250 million savings will be re-invested in front-line NHS services. Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority (SHA) and primary care trusts (PCTs) will be contributing £13 million towards the £250 million national savings.

Nationally, savings will be achieved largely through SHA and PCT reconfiguration. Reconfiguration proposals are developed locally by SHAs and PCTs and

these will be subject to public consultation over the coming months. The precise contribution of PCTs to the £13 million Surrey and Sussex savings plan will be determined by the SHA and the PCTs once reconfiguration proposals are agreed in the new year.

CABINET OFFICE

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23720]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office is committed to reducing carbon emissions where practical and is currently working with the Carbon Trust to potentially improve its energy management practices and identify likely areas for potential energy savings.

Once this work has been completed, the Cabinet Office will consider signing up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development plan. [23875]

Mr. Jim Murphy: A copy of the Cabinet Office Skills Development plan will be placed in the Library today.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of his Department. [23799]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office competence based recruitment system is designed to identify candidates with the most suitable skills and competences for the job. Candidates are asked, on their application form and at interview to give evidence of their ability to communicate effectively. Candidates are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing, and where necessary asked to provide evidence of their numeracy levels. There is also scope, within the selection system, for further testing of candidate's communication and numerical skills through verbal and numerical reasoning tests. Specifically, the Department has used the SHL VCC3 verbal evaluation test and the SHL NCC4 numerical evaluation test.

Strategy Unit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what each of the phases is of the Strategy Unit's Health Strategy, Analytical Report; and if he will make a statement. [23005]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Analytical Report was phase one. It assessed health outcomes in the United Kingdom, trends and drivers of future demand and issues relating to health care capacity. The report was submitted as a contribution to debate across Government and are available on the Strategy Unit website (www.strategy.gov.uk).

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Debt Arrears

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many charging orders relating to unsecured debt were made in each month since 1990, broken down by region; and if she will make a statement. [24301]

Ms Harman: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's Skills Development Plan. [23874]

Bridget Prentice: Copies of the Departmental Skills Development Plan 2004–09 and the 2005 update to the plan have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of new recruits to her Department do not have a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics. [23782]

Bridget Prentice: My Department does not collect statistical data on the number of new recruits with level 2 qualifications.

General recruitment asks for administration experience or the relevant qualifications (ie five GCSE's or equivalent at grade C or above including English language) for administrative grades or two A-levels (and English language for executive grades.

Recruits can therefore be appointed on the basis of their experience or qualifications and no distinction is made between the two.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what methods of assessment of *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills are used as part of the recruitment process by employees of her Department. [23891]

Bridget Prentice: My Department carries out no formal assessment of literacy and numerical skills for new recruits below senior civil service level.

General recruitment asks for administration experience or the relevant qualifications (ie five GCSE's or equivalent at grade C or above including English language) for administration grades or two A-levels (and English language) for executive grades. Certain posts at executive grade and above involve written or IT tests for posts in a policy area, communications or IT.

All appointees to senior civil service posts in the Department will have attended a full-day assessment centre prior to their panel interview. The assessment

centre includes a written exercise in which candidates are given a mixture of word-based evidence and numerical data to analyse and evaluate. This exercise is assessed in relation to a candidate's ability to build a constructive argument from the data provided.

Legal Aid

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to review the legal aid process; and if she will make a statement. [22825]

Bridget Prentice: Legal aid in Northern Ireland is currently the subject of a significant reform programme following the enactment of the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has succeeded the Law Society of Northern Ireland as the body responsible for operating the Legal Aid Scheme. The Commission is responsible for providing publicly funded legal services on a basis which will ensure that limited public funds are targeted at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in society.

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many solicitors carry out legal aid work in the constituency of Hemel Hempstead; and if she will make a statement. [24036]

Bridget Prentice: There are currently seven solicitor firms with offices located in Hemel Hempstead that presently hold a legal aid contract with the Legal Services Commission to carry out a variety of publicly funded work. The Commission does not hold information about the number of solicitors employed in each office. Solicitors located in other areas may regularly undertake legal aid work in Hemel Hempstead, for example providing advice at police stations.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if the Government will allocate funds separately for civil legal aid and criminal legal aid. [24055]

Bridget Prentice: My Department allocates a single budget to the Legal Services Commission. However, Section 5(2) of the Access to Justice Act 1999 places a duty on the Lord Chancellor to notify Parliament of the sums he determines are appropriate for the funding of services provided by the Community Legal Service (CLS). No such provisions apply for funding the Criminal Defence Service (CDS).

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total cost of legal aid has been in each year since 2003–04. [24071]

Bridget Prentice: Expenditure on legal aid in England and Wales during 2003–04 and 2004–05 was £2,077 million and £2,037 million respectively.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department has spent on external media relations in each month of the last year. [14683]

Bridget Prentice: The Department spent £5,670 on external media relations in each month of the last year.

Parliamentary Deposits

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the effect of its proposals to lower the threshold for losing deposits in parliamentary elections on the ability of extremist political parties to nominate candidates. [23639]

Ms Harman: The Government's assessment of the Electoral Commission's recommendation to lower the threshold for losing deposits in parliamentary elections is that it would be expected to result in encouraging more independent candidates and smaller parties to engage in the political process. Maintaining the current subscriber system, coupled with the £500 deposit, will ensure that those who seek to bring the democratic system into disrepute by standing as frivolous candidates or for commercial gain will be deterred.

Royal Prerogative

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 165W, on the Royal Prerogative, whether the Prime Minister is made aware that he is exercising a power under the Royal Prerogative at the time he exercises it. [22364]

Ms Harman: Ministers take decisions under the authority of the powers available to them and under the rule of law.

Salisbury Courts Centre

Robert Key: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the in-service date is for the new courts centre in Salisbury. [23595]

Ms Harman: The current programme under the new court in Salisbury will be ready for use in spring 2008.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* outstanding asylum appeals, *(b)* outstanding immigration appeals and *(c)* outstanding entry clearance appeals were transferred from the Immigration Appellate Authority to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal in April; and how many appeals in each category are awaiting determination by the tribunal. [20498]

Bridget Prentice: Information available from the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) indicates that, at the end of March 2005, *(a)* 16,300 asylum cases, *(b)* 10,500 immigration cases (comprising in-country and entry clearance appeals) and *(c)* 8,600 family visitor cases were outstanding with the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA).

Under transitional legislation, all outstanding work with the IAA was transferred to an appropriate stage of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) following its commencement on 4 April 2005.

As at the end of June 2005, the latest provisional figures from the AIT indicate that there were 12,650 asylum appeals, 17,550 immigration appeals (comprising in-country and entry clearance appeals) and 17,800 family visitor appeals considered to be outstanding before the AIT.

It is not possible to provide the proportion of those appeals transferred from the IAA to the AIT, which are still considered to be outstanding, without incurring disproportionate costs.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Discretionary Social Fund

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress in reviewing the discretionary social fund. [23055]

Mr. Plaskitt: The social fund plays an important part in helping people on the lowest incomes avoid the need to resort to high cost lenders. Significant improvements to the social fund budgeting loan scheme are being introduced in April 2006. These changes, which are being supported by an additional £210 million (net) over the three years to 2008–09, are intended to make loans more accessible and more affordable. The improvements include changes to the way in which existing budgeting loan debt affects an applicant's ability to take out a further loan, lower repayment rates, longer repayment periods and a major simplification of the way that the maximum loan amounts that can be offered to eligible applicants are calculated. The minimum amount an applicant can borrow as a budgeting loan will increase from £30 to £100 and the maximum debt available as a combination of crisis and budgeting loans will increase from £1,000 to £1,500.

It is important that people on low incomes are not penalised for saving. That is why the changes to the budgeting loan scheme will also include an increase in the capital limits. From April 2006 the amount an applicant can have in savings without it affecting their access to budgeting loans will be doubled to £1,000 for working age applicants and £2,000 for pensioners.

The aim of future changes will be to ensure that the social fund is not merely a safety net in times of need but will also help people to become self-reliant and able to take control of their spending decisions. We want to ensure that reform will contribute to improving financial inclusion for those on the lowest income.

DNA Bioscience

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times he has met representatives of DNA Bioscience since May in connection with his ministerial responsibilities. [24494]

Mr. Hutton: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) have had any such meetings.

Household Statistics

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of children have lived in households with *(a)* no adult in work, *(b)* a single parent and *(c)* less than 60 per cent. of median income in each year since 1976; and if he will make a statement. [20686]

Margaret Hodge: At spring 2005 there were 15.7 per cent. of children living in a household with no adult in work and 22.1 per cent. of children living in a lone parent household.

Percentage of children in (a) households with no one in work and (b) lone parent households from 1992 to 2005

Period as at spring	*Children in households with no one in work*	*Children in lone parent households*
1992	19.7	17.1
1993	20.3	18.0
1994	21.0	19.5
1995	20.6	20.6
1996	19.8	20.2
1997	18.4	19.9
1998	18.5	21.1
1999	18.0	21.6
2000	16.4	21.0
2001	16.1	21.3
2002	16.7	22.2
2003	16.1	22.4
2004	15.9	22.6
2005	15.7	22.1

Source:
Household labour force survey

Between 1996–97 and 2003–04 the number of children who live in households with less than 60 per cent. of median income has fallen by 600,000 before housing costs and 700,000 after housing costs.

Percentage of children who have lived in households with less than 60 per cent. of median income

	Percentage
Before housing costs—FRS (GB)	
1994–05	23
1995–06	22
1996–07	25
1997–08	25
1998–09	24
1999–2000	23
2000–01	21
2001–02	21
2002–03	21
2003–04	21
After housing costs—FRS (GB)	
1994–05	31
1995–06	31
1996–07	33
1997–08	32
1998–09	33
1999–2000	32
2000–01	30
2001–02	30
2002–03	28
2003–04	28

Notes:
1. The figures are from the households below average income (HBAI) publication, DWP. http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai.asp.
2. Family resource survey (FRS) figures are for Great Britain. The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years.
3. In order to maintain comparability with data in different years FRS data has been used. FES data is available for years 1993–94 and earlier but is not directly comparable with FRS.

Source:
Family resource survey

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many wards in the Waverley borough council area have over 50 percent. of children with *(a)* one parent and *(b)* two parents receiving out of work means-tested benefits. [20841]

Margaret Hodge: There are no wards in Waverley borough council where more than 50 per cent. of children have parents in receipt of out-of-work income-related benefits.

Pensions

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he intends to allow scheme actuaries to continue to set contribution rates for occupational pension funds; and if he will make a statement. [22872]

Mr. Timms: Part 3 of the Pensions Act 2004 sets out the framework for the new scheme funding requirements that will apply to most private sector defined benefit occupational pension schemes and which will replace the current minimum funding requirement. The detail of the requirements will be set out in regulations to be made under part 3 of the Act. I expect these to come into force on 30 December 2005.

The new arrangements place the ultimate responsibility for funding decisions with the trustees, acting in partnership with the employer, and taking account of the advice of the scheme actuary. We firmly believe that this responsibility should rest with the trustees, given their fiduciary duty to act in the interests of scheme members.

We therefore do not consider that it is appropriate for the scheme actuary to continue to set contribution rates in the exceptional circumstances where a scheme's rules currently give the actuary this power, rather than the trustees or the employer.

In these circumstances, trustees will be required to agree the funding strategy with the employer, having regard to the recommendations of the actuary on certain key matters. In addition, the actuary's certification of the scheme's schedule of contributions must state that the rates shown are not lower than those he or she would have provided for if the actuary, rather than the trustees, had the responsibility for preparing the schedule.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* the UK who have lost their pensions due to firm insolvency since 1997. [22151]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available. The Government are currently inviting notifications from affected pension schemes to the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), and are therefore obtaining some information on the number of members facing pensions losses due to company insolvency. In due course, information will also be collected on individual members in schemes qualifying for FAS, including their addresses, at which point it may be possible to make some estimates of numbers affected in particular areas.

Based on our most recent data collection for the FAS, we know of around 70,000 non-pensioner members in schemes that are potentially eligible for assistance from the FAS as a result of their schemes being wound up in circumstances of insolvency or where the employer no longer exists.

Second-hand Smoke (Asthma)

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the percentage of cases of asthma attacks that are caused by second-hand smoke in the workplace. [21513]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Government have not made an estimate on the percentage of cases of asthma attacks that are caused by second-hand smoke in the workplace.

The national asthma panel is an annual survey of asthma sufferers commissioned by Asthma UK. In 2003, results from the national asthma panel showed that of the 40 per cent. of people with asthma who said things at work can worsen their asthma, 38 per cent. said cigarette smoke triggered their asthma. The national asthma panel also found that 82 per cent. of people with asthma reported that other people's smoke makes their asthma worse.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Common Agricultural Policy

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy not to give up the UK's EU budget rebate in return for Common Agricultural Policy reform. [23897]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the House on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 707.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in the Democratic Republic of Congo towards the electoral mandate agreed in the 2002 peace deal. [23977]

Ian Pearson: Good progress is being made towards holding elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo by June 2006. Nearly 20 million Congolese have registered to vote, and the Congolese Parliament will shortly begin work on the electoral law. A referendum on the draft constitution is scheduled for 18 December.

The UK has contributed £10 million to the UN-administered trust fund for elections, and will contribute £8 million to election security. We and partners were successful in securing $103 million of additional UN funding for the UN peacekeeping force (MONUC)'s support to election logistics.

We and international partners continue to push the transitional Government and Independent Electoral Commission to stick closely to the agreed timetable.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will assess the effectiveness of MONUC in meeting its responsibility to protect civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [23978]

Ian Pearson: The UN peacekeeping force (MONUC) has conducted effective operations to disarm Ituri militias and disrupt the activities of foreign armed groups. However, armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo continue to persecute civilians.

Through UN Security Council resolutions, we have ensured that civilian protection is integral to MONUC's mandate. We continue to support MONUC's robust approach to protecting civilians and tackling armed groups in Ituri, which they have begun to replicate in the Kivu provinces. We are working with MONUC to ensure that it can fully implement its mandate.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in tackling corruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [23979]

Ian Pearson: Corruption remains endemic across Congolese society, including in politics, business and the military. The Security Council underlined the urgency of reducing corruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo in its resolution 1621 of 6 September 2005. Thus far, the Congolese Government have rejected international proposals to create a formal anti-corruption body.

We believe that corruption must urgently be addressed and continue to press for action, including on accountability in paying salaries to the armed forces and the transparent management of natural resources.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the arms embargo in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [23980]

Ian Pearson: The UK continues to observe and support strongly the UN and EU arms embargoes on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Despite international efforts to enforce the embargoes, and the monitoring of the embargo by UN peacekeepers and by the UN Group of Experts, there is some evidence that rebel groups operating in eastern DRC continue to use illegally supplied arms and ammunition.

We continue to work to strengthen enforcement of the embargoes. We are close to securing agreement in the UN Security Council on identifying a list of arms embargo violators to be subject to assets freezes and travel bans.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in Kettering constituency. [24384]

Mr. Straw: None.

Kaliningrad Peninsula

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will visit the Kaliningrad peninsula to promote the entry of this territory into the European Union. [23896]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no plans at present to visit the Russian region of Kaliningrad. The Kaliningrad region is part of the Russian Federation, which currently has no plans to seek membership of the European Union.

Liechtenstein

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will assess the merits of inviting Liechtenstein to join the European Union. [23898]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The EU currently enjoys good relations with Liechtenstein through the European Economic Area Agreement. The question of applying for EU membership would be an issue for the people and Government of Liechtenstein.

North Korea

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will distance himself from US foreign policy towards North Korea; and if he will initiate discussions with the North Korean Government to promote good relations. [24297]

Ian Pearson: The UK, alongside the EU, wishes to see the nuclear issue in North Korea resolved peacefully through negotiation in the Six Party Talks, leading to the verifiable dismantlement of North Korea's illicit weapons programmes and resumption of their engagement in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The UK, in agreement with the EU, also wants to see an improvement in the human rights situation in North Korea. We discuss our concerns regularly with the US, as it is evident that US policy is directed towards the same goals.

The UK established diplomatic relations with North Korea in December 2000. We maintain regular dialogue with the North Korean authorities, both through their embassy in London and ours in Pyongyang.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of militia activity along tribal lines in Darfur. [23982]

Ian Pearson: Tribal allegiance has some influence on the organisation of the militias in Darfur, including the Arab militias and rebel movements. But there are many other factors, including political and financial gain, which motivate the formation and activities of these armed groups. In recent weeks Darfur has seen a worrying increase in violence, caused mainly by banditry. We condemn these attacks and have made clear that those responsible must be brought to justice.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of harassment, attacks and abductions of non-governmental organisation workers in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [23983]

Ian Pearson: The latest report by the UN Secretary-General on Darfur refers to frequent harassment and assaults on humanitarian aid workers during incidents of banditry, and states that these attacks have increased in cruelty and violence. We have made clear that these attacks are entirely unacceptable and that those responsible must be brought to justice. Any information on the perpetrators should be passed to the relevant bodies for consideration under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1591 and 1593.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress the International Criminal Court (ICC) is making in its investigations in Darfur; what assessment he has made of the response of the regime in Khartoum to the ICC; and if he will make a statement. [24002]

Ian Pearson: The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, will be making his second report to the Security Council in December as required under United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1593. He will have the opportunity at that time to up-date the council on the progress of his investigation and to let the council know the status of co-operation from the Government of Sudan and other involved states, groups and organisations. UNSCR 1593 imposes a legal obligation on the Government of Sudan to co-operate with the court.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Sudanese Liberation Army and *(b)* the Justice and Equality Movement. [24003]

Ian Pearson: We are in regular contact with the two main rebel movements—the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) through officials in the Sudan unit in London and our embassy in Khartoum.

Most recently, on 20 October, Her Majesty's ambassador to Sudan travelled to Darfur to meet Minni Minnawi, Secretary General of the SLM/A, and urged him to resolve the internal divisions within the movement, abide by the ceasefire and reach a political solution as soon as possible.

My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa plans to meet Dr. Khalil Ibrahim, President of the JEM, on 9 November.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the EU has given to the African Union peace-keeping operation in Darfur. [24004]

Ian Pearson: The UK has committed £19 million funding this year to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). This brings our total contribution to AMIS, since its inception, to almost £32 million. We are using this money to help airlift the troops into Darfur; to provide equipment, including 950 vehicles, of which 450 have already been purchased; and to provide military and civilian policing advice, expertise and training.

The European Commission has provided €92 million from the African Peace Facility to AMIS. We also expect that the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 7 November will approve a further €70 million from this source. In addition, to date, bilateral contributions from the EU have totalled more than €70 million. The EU has provided its assistance to AMIS in terms of planning and management support, funding, and logistics.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards the deployment of 10,000 troops to the UN mission in Sudan. [24005]

Ian Pearson: Deployment of the UN peace support mission to Sudan (UNMIS) is continuing, with 3,639 personnel deployed as of 30 October. Deployment has been slower than expected due to the rainy season and delays from Troop Contributing Countries. The UN currently expects foil deployment of the mandated 10,000 military personnel and up to 715 civilian police by January 2006.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of whether the Government of Sudan are using helicopter gun ships to attack refugees in Darfur. [24006]

Ian Pearson: We have received unconfirmed reports that the Government of Sudan airforce have been used in recent operations in Darfur. The African Union is currently investigating and we await their report. Offensive military overflights by the Government of Sudan would constitute a breach of their obligations under the Abuja Security Protocol and, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591, those responsible are liable to targeted sanctions.

UN Convention Against Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the timetable is for British ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption; what discussions his Department has had with the Scottish Parliament in relation to corresponding orders; and if he will make a statement. [24635]

Ian Pearson: The Government hope to be in a position to ratify the UN Convention Against Corruption by the end of this year. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not held any discussions with the Scottish Parliament.

Zimbabwe

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on President Mugabe's Operation Murambatsvina. [23616]

Ian Pearson: Since my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's written statement of 14 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 8–9WS, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Anna Tibaijuka, has visited Zimbabwe to examine the effects of Operation Murambatsvina.

Her report provided a damning indictment of the inhumanity of the Mugabe Government. We supported discussion of her report in the Security Council in July and October. The Foreign Secretary also drew attention to her findings, and to the need for action, in his speech to the UN General Assembly in September. We deplore the Government of Zimbabwe's rejection of the Special Envoy's report and we are concerned at the continuation of policies that exacerbate the suffering of those affected. We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to help the victims of this policy and, together with our international partners, press the Government of Zimbabwe to reverse its policies so that they address, rather than worsen, the humanitarian situation of its people.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place to tackle antisocial behaviour by tenants in the private rented sector. [24070]

Mr. Hanson: The procedure for evicting a private sector tenant who is guilty of antisocial behaviour can be initiated at relatively short notice under the notice to quit procedure. Where the tenant's own landlord is unwilling to take action, the Housing Executive, registered housing associations and private sector landlords can seek injunctions to protect their tenants, persons visiting their tenants and persons carrying out a lawful activity in the vicinity of their tenants' homes, from conduct causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance. A landlord can seek such an injunction against any person, including a tenant of another landlord.

In addition, the Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 allows the Housing Executive to seek antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) to protect its tenants, persons visiting or residing with their tenants, and persons in or likely to be in the vicinity of the executive's houses, from behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. The Housing Executive can apply for an ASBO against any person, including a private sector tenant.

Benefit Appeals

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful appeals were made in Northern Ireland against decisions on (i) disability and (ii) sickness benefits in each year since 1998. [24182]

Mr. Hanson: Due to the archiving facility within the computerised management information system operating within the appeal service, it is not possible to obtain the requested information for the 1998 and 1999 years. The information has therefore been provided for each full calendar year from 2000 onwards.

Appeal outcome by benefit type—1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004

	Disability appeals		*Sickness/ incapacity benefit*	
	Number successful (allowed)	*Number unsuccessful (disallowed)*	*Number successful (allowed)*	*Number unsuccessful (disallowed)*
2000	1,003	3,154	2,517	3,245
2001	1,959	6,055	1,870	2,790
2002	2,057	7,837	1,644	2,601
2003	1,840	6,421	1,550	2,413
2004	1,621	4,532	1,233	2,082
Total	8,480	27,999	8,814	13,131

Prior to April 2004, each component (care and mobility) of disability living allowance was counted as a separate appeal. This practice changed from 1 April 2004, when a disability living allowance appeal was counted as one appeal, regardless of the number of components involved. The decrease in disability appeal outcomes for during 2004 reflects this change.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23729]

Mr. Hain: As part of its sustainable development strategy the NIO has a comprehensive programme to control and manage its energy consumption and to reduce carbon emissions. The department adheres to the Government's sustainable energy policy and reports through the public sector energy campaign. The Department will continue to access services of the Carbon Trust to support its energy improvement campaign under the existing arrangements.

This answer only applies to the Northern Ireland Office and not to the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland administration.

Civil Service

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many permanent Northern Ireland civil servants have been demoted in each of the last 10 years; how many of these have been voluntarily demoted; and what the respective *(a)* grades and *(b)* branches of the officers were (i) before and (ii) after demotion. [18918]

Angela E. Smith: In the Northern Ireland Civil Service demotions may fall into two categories—one requested by the individual officer and the second as a result of an individual's inefficiency at the present grade or as the consequence of disciplinary action.

A table setting out the total number of Northern Ireland Civil Servants demoted and also voluntarily demoted for each year from January 1996 to 2005 to date, can be found at Table 1.

Table 2 shows for each year aggregate demotions by grade and whether or not there was a change of branch after demotion. To protect the identity of individual members of staff concerned branches before and after demotion have not been provided.

Table 1: Overall number of demotions and voluntary demotions of Northern Ireland Civil Servants in Northern Ireland Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Office, 1996–2005 to date

	Total number of demotions	Total number of voluntary demotions
1996	9	7
1997	3	3
1998	2	2
1999	14	8
2000	13	10
2001	13	11
2002	13	10
2003	12	8
2004	15	12
2005, to date	11	11
Overall total	105	82

Table 2: Northern Ireland Civil Servants demoted in Northern Ireland Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Office 1996 to 2005

Grade after demotion	Grade before demotion	Number demoted	Branch: Changed branch	Branch: Remained in branch
1996				
AA	AO	3	2	1
AO	EO2	3	3	—
Grade 7	Grade 5	1	1	—
ASO	Scientific Officer	1	1	—
EO1	SO	1	1	—
1997				
Roadworker (Team Leader F)	Foreman	1	1	—
EO11	EO1	1	1	—
EO1	SO	1	1	—
1998				
AO	EO2	1	1	—
AA	SSO2	1	—	1
1999				
AA	AO	5	3	2
Class 3	Craft Helper	1	1	—
EO2	EO1	2	1	1
AO	EO2	2	2	—
DP	Grade 7	1	1	—
AO	Programmer	1	1	—
Roadworker 2	Roadworker 1	1	—	1
EO2	SO	1	—	1
2000				
Grade 7	Grade 6	2	1	1
EO2	EO1	1	1	—
AO	EO2	2	2	—
Grade 5	Grade 3	1	—	1
PTO Civil Engineer	Graduate Trainee Civil Engineer	1	1	—
AA	SSO2	3	3	—
Support Grade Band 2 (SGB2)	Support Grade Band 1 (SGB1)	2	1	1
Typist	Typing Manager	1	—	1
2001				
SGB1	AO	1	1	—
C (EO1/EO2)	B2 (SO)	2	2	—
EO2	EO1	1	1	—
SSO1	EO1	1	1	—
AO	EO2	2	2	—
SGB2	SGB1	3	2	1
AO	SO	1	1	—
EO1	SO	1	—	1
AA	SSO2	1	—	1
2002				
AA	AO	3	1	2
SSO1	EO1	1	1	—
AO	EO2	1	—	1

Table 2: Northern Ireland Civil Servants demoted in Northern Ireland Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Office 1996 to 2005

Grade after demotion	Grade before demotion	Number demoted	Branch: Changed branch	Branch: Remained in branch
AO	EO1	1	1	—
PTO	HPTO	1	—	1
SGB2	SGB1	1	1	—
SGB1	SM3	1	—	1
EO1	SO	3	3	—
AA	SSO2	1	—	1
2003				
AA	AO	6	3	3
Class 2	Class 1	2	—	2
EO2	EO1	1	—	1
Inspector Grade 2	Inspector Grade 1	1	1	—
SS02	SSO1	1	—	1
AA	SSO2	1	—	1
2004				
AA	AO	5	2	3
DI (AO)	C (EO1/2)	1	1	—
D2 (AA)	DI (AO)	1	—	1
AO	EO2	4	2	2
DP	Grade 7	1	1	—
AO	SSO1	1	1	—
AA	SSO2	2	—	2
2005				
AA	AO	3	—	3
SG2 (Lab Attendant)	ASO	1	1	—
DI (AO)	C (EO1/2)	1	1	—
Class 3	Class 2	1	1	—
EO2	EO1	1	—	1
Scientific Officer	Higher Scientific Officer	1	1	—
AA	SSO2	2	1	1
EO2	SO	1	1	—

Glossary of Grades:
AA : Administrative Assistant
AO : Administrative Officer
ASO: Assistant Scientific Officer
DP: Deputy Principal
EO: Executive Officer
HPTO: Higher Professional and Technical Officer
PTO: Professional and Technical Officer
SGB: Support Grade Ban
SM: Support Manager
SO: Staff Officer
SSO: Social Securit

Cl hange Targets

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the contribution that action by local authorities in Northern Ireland will make to meet climate change targets. [22762]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland contributes to the UK climate change targets. There are no separate emission reduction targets for Northern Ireland.

Data are available on emission trends at regional and local level. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published estimates of carbon dioxide emissions for 2003 by local authority area in the UK on 21 October 2005. The Northern Ireland figures were attached.

These are experimental statistics subject to some limitations and uncertainties and it is too early to use them as performance indicators for local areas.

Crosshill Quarry

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which authority permitted the setting aside of the conditions imposed by the planning appeal tribunal on the disposal of railway carriages at Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin. [15259]

Angela E. Smith: At the time of the waste licensing tribunal in July 1984, Antrim borough council was the waste licensing authority for the Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin site. The tribunal recommended that the council should approve the waste licence and apply a number of conditions for the burial of the railway carriages under Article 12 of the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978. The Department is not aware of the extent to which the conditions were met.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the dismantling of railway carriages at Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin *(a)* commenced and *(b)* was completed. [15260]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment is not aware of the exact dates for the beginning and completion of the railway carriages' relocation within Crosshill Quarry. The contractors intended to complete this work during November and December 2003. However, it is the Department's understanding that, once work had commenced, the weight of the waterlogged carriages necessitated cutting them into three sections to allow their movement and relocation. As a result, the work took longer than originally anticipated. Documentary and photographic evidence obtained by departmental staff during two site visits in February 2004 recorded the completion of the relocation work.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an investigation into the dismantling of railway carriages at Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin is being undertaken; and if he will make a statement. [15261]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment is not currently undertaking an investigation into the dismantling of the railway carriages. The Department has carried out soil and water tests at and around the quarry and the results have shown that there is no cause for concern with regard to asbestos contamination of the surrounding area. The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland has completed an investigation into the dismantling of railway carriages at Crosshill Quarry and no investigations are currently being undertaken.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Environment and Heritage Service was responsible for monitoring the dismantling of carriages at Crosshill Quarry, Crumlin; and what monitoring was carried out *(a)* before, *(b)* during and *(c)* after the railway carriages were dismantled. [15262]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service's water management unit visited the site, prior to and after the dismantling of the carriages. Water quality analysis has indicated that there is no cause for concern in relation to water pollution from the site. The asbestos levels detected in two of the five water samples collected in November 2004 were not of a level considered hazardous to humans to drink or to aquatic organisms. The Environment and Heritage Service's waste management and contaminated land unit did not monitor the site before 19 December 2003 as Antrim borough council was then the statutory waste licensing authority. The waste management and contaminated land unit monitored the site during February 2004 and has photographic evidence that the dismantling and reburial of the carriages had been completed. The unit also undertook detailed soil sampling of the quarry floor in February 2005 and found small quantities of white asbestos, for which remedial action was taken.

Disability Support

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to promote disability support in Northern Ireland. [22754]

Angela E. Smith: The Department for Employment and Learning provides support for people with disabilities through the provision of guidance and information on employment and training. The Department's Disablement Advisory Service (DAS) works closely with employers, health professionals and disability organisations to promote its services and programmes to people with disabilities.

Divorce

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children there are in each region whose parents are divorced ranked in descending order; and what percentage of all children this represents in each case. [21181]

Angela E. Smith: The numbers of dependent children living with a divorced lone parent, as recorded in the 2001 Census, are given in the table. These constitute a subset of all children with divorced parents and will not include, for example, children of divorced parents living with other relatives or those living in communal establishments.

Local Government district	*Dependent children in families living with divorced lone parent (A)*	*All dependent children in families (B)*	*A as a percentage of B*
Belfast	4,345	66,962	6.49
Derry	1,794	31,867	5.63
Lisburn	1,440	29,967	4.81
Craigavon	1,156	22,420	5.16
North Down	934	17,495	5.34
Newtownabbey	985	19,476	5.06
Ards	849	17,637	4.81
Newry and Mourne	907	26,193	3.46
Coleraine	829	14,177	5.85
Down	719	18,032	3.99
Castlereagh	705	16,090	4.38
Ballymena	659	14,546	4.53
Antrim	563	12,878	4.37
Carrickfergus	480	9,539	5.03
Armagh	479	15,574	3.08
Fermanagh	479	16,082	2.98
Dungannon	474	14,003	3.38
Omagh	421	14,343	2.94
Strabane	458	11,237	4.08
Banbridge	377	11,007	3.43
Limavady	339	9,270	3.66
Larne	321	7,558	4.25

Local Government district	Dependent children in families living with divorced lone parent (A)	All dependent children in families (B)	A as a percentage of B
Magherafelt	381	11,802	3.23
Cookstown	349	9,651	3.62
Ballymoney	268	7,224	3.71
Moyle	190	4,325	4.39
Northern Ireland	20,901	449,355	4.65

Source:
2001 Census of Population

Dyslexia

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was given in each of the last five years to dyslexia organisations in Northern Ireland. [22801]

Angela E. Smith: The following table provides details of funding provided directly to dyslexia organisations.

Financial year	Amount (£)	Name of organisation/comments
2003-04	5,697.67	Dyslexia and Dyspraxia Support—Funding provided by Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, under Peace II, to assist with a conference, which outlined how the Department of Education, the law, the psychology service and parents can work together to improve access to education and training for people who suffer from dyslexia.
2004-05	1,978.12	British Dyslexia Association—Funding provided by Department of Employment and Learning to deliver awareness training to relevant training organisations.

Eaga Partnership

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints have been made against the Eaga Partnership in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland. [22991]

Mr. Hanson: Records relating to the number of complaints made to Eaga Partnership Ltd are only available for the period April 2003 to March 2005.

The information for this period, which relates to complaints made to Eaga Partnership Ltd, is as follows:

	Number of complaints
April 2003 to March 2004	3
April 2004 to March 2005	1

Human Resources Contract

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Project *(a)* Board and *(b)* Team for the electronic Human Resources Contract indicating (i) the Department or agency each represents and (ii) their areas of expertise and experience. [22145]

Angela E. Smith: The Project Board consists of senior civil service members experienced in and representing the personnel function within the NICS departments and the NIO. The director of personnel for the NICS chairs the Board and its members include personnel directors from each department and the NIO, along with a senior representative from the Central Procurement Directorate, the Strategic Investment Board and the NI Statistical and Research Agency. The eHR team is comprised of experienced personnel, payroll, ICT, project, programme and change management experts. This team is supported by a number of quality review teams. These teams consist of personnel and payroll practitioners from across the NICS and NIO. The appointed legal and financial advisers to the project join the Board for discussions as required.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* professional advice and *(b)* independent peer review has been commissioned in respect of the Northern Ireland Civil Service's decisions and processes in relation to the electronic Human Resources Contract. [22146]

Angela E. Smith: Legal advice is provided by Denton Wilde Sapte who are engaged by the Strategic Investment Board. Financial advice has been provided by Deloitte MCS Limited and Grant Thornton UK LLP. Advice is also provided by the Strategic Investment Board and the Central Procurement Directorate of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The eHR project has been subject to an independent Peer Review process which commenced in November 2002. Five reviews have been conducted under the peer review process in accordance with Office of Government Commerce guidance on the completion of Gateway reviews. The Office of Government Commerce is an office of HM Treasury. Each review has been led by a designated Office of Government Commerce member of staff and supported by a panel of members independent of the eHR project.

IRA Decommissioning

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) on what date he was first informed of the identity of the two clergy witnesses to IRA decommissioning; [20744]

(2) on what date he was first informed that the IRA had invited reverend Good and Father Reid to be the clergy witnesses to IRA decommissioning. [20745]

Mr. Woodward: On 26 September, the IICD gave a press conference and submitted a report to the British and Irish Governments. The Reverend Good and Father Reid attended that conference in their capacity as independent witnesses. The identities of the independent witnesses were known from that point onwards. The IICD's report to the two Governments of 26 September referred to the role of Reverend Good and Father Reid in witnessing the decommissioning. The independent witnesses provided invaluable extra assurance in the process.

Landlords

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* information and *(b)* training is made available by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to landlords. [24067]

Mr. Hanson: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has recognised the need to provide information and training to landlords on a range of issues. Action to date has taken a number of forms. It has:

Held a number of open seminars in Belfast, Londonderry and Coleraine to discuss general topics of interest to landlords.

Established a Landlords Association in the North and West of the Province.

Established a "Landlords Forum" whose members include the Landlords Association for Northern Ireland, Smartmove and others.

Established a "Private Rented Sector Advice and Information Forum" to assess the support and education needs of landlords and develop a programme to meet these needs.

Held, and continues to hold, periodic landlord seminars to update landlords on the application of housing benefit.

In addition, information has been provided to landlords on a range of houses in multiple occupation issues and guidance material made available on housing benefit and the private rented sector.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce a requirement for landlords to agree written tenancy agreements with their tenants in the private rented sector. [24068]

Mr. Hanson: The draft Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, recently published for consultation by the Department for Social Development, includes provisions to place a requirement on private landlords to provide tenants with a written tenancy agreement.

Local Government

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were in *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time employment in each local council in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [24145]

Angela E. Smith: The number of district council employees for each of the last five years is not available. The most up-to-date figures, recorded at 1 January 2002, are set out in the table. An exercise to update this information is currently under way.

District council	*Full-time employees*	*Part-time employees*[1]
Antrim	208	70
Ards	299	82
Armagh	213	48
Ballymena	129	18
Ballymoney	89	31
Banbridge	156	32
Belfast	1810	549
Carrickfergus	152	44
Castlereagh	216	64
Coleraine	251	48
Cookstown	126	68
Craigavon	380	60
Derry	449	109
Down	236	54
Dungannon and South Tyrone	80	36
Fermanagh	212	31
Larne	146	13
Limavady	110	32
Lisburn	455	6
Magherafelt	121	76
Moyle	101	13
Newry and Mourne	367	32
Newtownabbey	281	181
North Down	301	152
Omagh	249	172
Strabane	141	11
Total	7,278	2,032

[1] Part time denotes anyone working fewer than 30 hours per week, including job sharers

London Olympics

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the potential benefits for Northern Ireland from London hosting the 2012 Olympics; and if he will make a statement. [22655]

Mr. Hanson: I have commissioned a strategic plan, which will be in place by January 2006. This will outline the options for maximising the opportunities that will increase participation and performance in sport, and to leave a legacy in sport, tourism and the economy. This will be reflected in the development of the new 10 year Strategy for Sport which will be offered for public consultation in February/March 2006.

Our priorities will be:

to improve Sport in Northern Ireland;

to focus on identifying young talent capable of achieving the highest level of success;

to leave a legacy of facilities, equipment and opportunity for the young people for tomorrow;

to host preparation camps and holding camps;

attract appropriate sporting events in the run up to 2012;

hold preliminary rounds of the Soccer tournament in Northern Ireland subject to the proposed Multi-Sports Stadium being built;

to maximise the amount of time in Northern Ireland for the Olympic Torch Relay;

to ensure Northern Ireland Business maximise the opportunities for business as a result of 2012;

we will ensure we plug into the initiatives under the 2012 cultural and volunteering programme.

Marriages

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many marriage ceremonies have taken place in *(a)* Antrim borough council and *(b)* Ards borough council in each of the last five years. [21241]

Angela E. Smith: The following tables give the number of marriages registered in Antrim and Ards local government districts and, of these, the number of civil ceremonies which took place in the Antrim and Ards council offices between 2000 and 2004.

Table: Number of marriages registered in Antrim local government district and of these the number of civil ceremonies that took place in the Antrim council office, 2000 to 2004[1]

	Civil marriages celebrated in Antrim council office	*Marriages registered in Antrim local government district*
2000	59	203
2001	60	221
2002	67	203
2003	46	201
2004[1]	48	203

[1] Data for 2004 are provisional.

Table: Number of marriages registered in Ards local government district and of these the number of civil ceremonies that took place in the Ards council office, 2000 to 2004[1]

	Civil marriages celebrated in Ards council office	*Marriages registered in Ards local government district*
2000	86	273
2001	80	290
2002	82	293
2003	75	291
2004[1]	65	244

[1] Data for 2004 are provisional.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many marriage licences were issued by *(a)* Antrim borough council and *(b)* Ards borough council in each of the last five years. [21243]

Angela E. Smith: Prior to 1 January 2004, all civil marriages were carried out either by Registrar's Certificate or Registrar's Licence but separate statistics are not available for each form of authority. The following tables give the total number of civil marriages in Antrim and Ards local government districts between 2000 and 2003.

New marriage legislation introduced from 1 January 2004 provided for universal civil preliminaries with a schedule issued by the registrar constituting the authority for all marriages, religious or civil, to take place. In 2004, 185 marriages were carried out by schedule in Antrim local government district and 231 marriages were carried out by schedule in Ards local government district. Of these 57 marriages in Antrim local government district and 78 marriages in Ards local government district were civil marriages.

A further three civil marriages in Antrim local government district and four civil marriages in Ards local government district took place in 2004, under the previous legislation.

Table 1: The total number of civil marriages in Antrim council office, 2000–03

	Civil marriages celebrated in Antrim council office
2000	59
2001	60
2002	67
2003	46

Table 2: The total number of civil marriages in Ards council office, 2000–03

	Civil marriages celebrated in Ards council office
2000	86
2001	80
2002	82
2003	75

MOT Tests

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce free MOT tests for pensioners in Northern Ireland. [23349]

Angela E. Smith: The Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency has no plans at present to introduce free MOT tests for pensioners in Northern Ireland.

New Schools

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new schools are planned to be built in each of the education board areas in Northern Ireland, broken down by location. [24181]

Angela E. Smith: There are 94 new schools currently being planned or under construction in Northern Ireland, for which funding has been approved by the Department of Education. Details of these are as follows.

Belfast education and library board area

Springhill P.S. Ballygomartin Road, Belfast
Suffolk P.S. Black's Road, Belfast
Orangefield P.S. Marina Park, Belfast
Strand/Sydenham P.S. Strandtown Street, Belfast
Rosetta P.S. Knockbreda Road, Belfast
La Salle Boys' S.S. Edenmore Drive, Belfast
Strathearn G.S. Belmont, Belfast
Ashfield Girls' H.S. Holywood Road, Belfast
Belfast Boys' Model, Ballysillan Road, Belfast
Belfast Model School for Girls, Dunkeld Gardens, Belfast
Grosvenor G.S. Cameronian Drive, Belfast
Orangefield H.S. Cameronian Drive, Belfast
Cedar Lodge Special School, Sheringhurst Park, Belfast
Harberton Special School, Harberton Park, Belfast
Greenwood Assessment Centre, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast
Mitchell House Special School, Holywood Road, Belfast
Sub total—16

North Eastern education and library board area

St. Mary's P.S. Portglenone
Mossley P.S. Newtownabbey
Holy Family P.S. Magherafelt
Camphill P.S. Ballymena
Leancy P.S. Ballymoney
Creggan P.S. Randalstown
Ballymena Maintained Primary Schools (amalgamation in two new schools)
Carnalridge P.S. Portrush
Fourtowns P.S. Ahoghill
Magheratelt P.S. Magherfelt

Moorfields P.S. Ballymena
St. MacNissius P.S. Tannaghmore
St. Patrick's and St. Brigid's P.S. Ballycastle
Coleraine Academy
Ballymoney H.S.
Rainey Endowed School, Magherafelt
Hillcroft Special School, Newtownabbey
Sub-total—18

South Eastern education and library board area

St. Ita's P.S. Carryduff[1]
Dundonald P.S
St. Joseph's P. S. Carryduff
East Lisburn Primary Schools (amalgamation in one new school)
St. Patrick's P.S. Saul, Downpatrick
Ballinderry P.S. Lisburn
Ballymacrickett P.S. Crumlin
St. Colman's P.S. Lambeg
Bangor Academy
Comber H.S.
Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock, Belfast
St. Patrick's G.S. Downpatrick
Tor Bank Special School, Dundonald
Brookfield Special School, Moira
Kircubbin Community Nursery School[1]
Sub-total— 15

Southern education and library board area

St. Clare's and St. Colman's P.S. Newry
St. Patrick's P.S. Donaghmore
Annaghmore and Tullyroan P.S. Portadown (amalgamation in one new school)
St. Teresa's P.S. Lurgan
St. Joseph's Convent P.S. Newry
Windmill Integrated P.S. Dungannon
Carrick P.S. Warrenpoint
Dromintee P.S. Newry
Dromore Central P.S.
Maralin P.S. Magheralin
Moneydarragh P.S. Annalong
St. Joseph's P.S. Ballymartin, Kilkeel
St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Forkhill
St. Peter's P.S. Cloughreagh, Bessbrook
St. Patrick's College, Dungannon
Fivemiletown H.S.
St. Joseph's Convent G.S. Donaghmore
St. Patrick's Academy, Dungannon
Abbey G.S. Newry
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown
Sub-total—20

Appendix A

Western education and library board area

St. Dympna's P.S. Dromore
Maguiresbridge P.S.
Kesh P.S.
Omagh Integrated P.S
Burnfoot, Dungiven and Largy P.S., Dungiven (amalgamation in one new school)
Coranny and Cornagague P.S. Roslea (amalgamation in one new school)
Enniskillen Integrated P.S.
Killen P.S., Castlederg
Lisbellaw P.S.
Lisnagelvin P.S. Londonderry
St. Columbkille's P.S. Carrickmore
St. Paul's P.S. Irvinestown
Holy Cross College, Strabane
St. Cecilia's College, Londonderry
St. Mary's College, Londonderry
Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh
St. Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
Lisneal College, Londonderry
Devenish College, Enniskillen
Loreto G.S. Omagh
Strabane G.S.
Cranny Special School, Omagh
Belmont House Special School, Londonderry
Erne Special School, Enniskillen
Limegrove and Glasvey Special Schools,
Limavady (amalgamation in one new school)
Sub-total—25
Grand total—94

All other schools are to replace existing sub-standard accommodation.

Note:

[1] Two schools, St. Ita's P S Carryduff and Kircubbin Nursery School (South Eastern) represent provision of new schools to meet demand for places within a defined area.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many ex gratia payments have been made by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to tenants in each year since 2001; and what the *(a)* highest, *(b)* lowest and *(c)* average payment was. [24074]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows:

	Number of payments	*Highest payment (£)*	*Lowest payment (£)*	*Average payment (£)*
2001–02	29	4,600	56	745
2002–03	22	3,354	60	915
2003–04	6	5,500	251	1,528
2004–05	12	3,116	55	666

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been awarded maximum points for intimidation under the Housing Executive's Housing Selection Scheme where the reason was that there was a serious risk of a person being killed or seriously injured as a result of *(a)* a tenant attack, *(b)* a racial attack, *(c)* a sectarian attack and *(d)* an attack motivated by hostility to a person's sexual orientation or disability. [24075]

Mr. Hanson: There are 253 cases on the Housing Executive waiting list with the maximum number of points for intimidation. The Housing Executive does not have a breakdown of the exact reason for the intimidation but it is in the process of upgrading its computer system so that in the future the reasons for the award of intimidation points can be recorded.

Planning Site Visits

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning site visits each of the local councils in Northern Ireland made in each of the last five years. [24160]

Angela E. Smith: Information about planning site visits made by local government councils is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the first sod to be cut in Cookstown for the new police academy. [21636]

Mr. Woodward: Subject to final decisions on the most appropriate funding arrangement the police hope to commence construction of the new Police College in the summer of 2007.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) when the Police Service of Northern Ireland diving unit was last provided with new diving suits and equipment; and what resources and equipment are available to the unit; [24716]

(2) what the *(a)* size and *(b)* composition of the Police Service of Northern Ireland diving unit is; what its budget was in each of the last five financial years; and what its allocation is for 2005–06. [24717]

Mr. Woodward: This is an operational matter for the chief constable, who will write to the hon. Lady. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers were involved in Operation Viper. [21175]

Mr. Woodward: Operation Viper is aimed at reducing the number of deaths on our roads and identifies drivers who break the law. Police target dangerous and careless drivers, motorists travelling with excess speed or not wearing a seat belt, and drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Operation Viper is information and intelligence led. It is enacted on a number of occasions throughout the year and the number of officers deployed on each operation varies. The allocation of resources is a matter for the Chief Constable.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland speeding or road tax detection units there were on the Bangor to Belfast road between the hours of 9am and 1pm on 24 July. [21176]

Mr. Woodward: Between 9am and 1pm on 24 July 2005, one mobile road-safety camera unit from Belfast was deployed with responsibility to patrol, among other roads, the A2 between Tillysburn roundabout and Abbey Street, Bangor.

At the same time, one mobile road safety unit from Antrim was deployed with responsibility to patrol, among other roads, the Sydenham bypass between Tillysburn roundabout and the M3.

Private Rented Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to ensure that *(a)* landlords and *(b)* tenants in the private rented sector in Northern Ireland are made aware of their (i) responsibilities and (ii) rights. [24066]

Mr. Hanson: The draft Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, recently published for consultation by the Department for Social Development, includes provisions to allow the Department for Social Development and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to publish information on the rights and duties of landlords under the order and under the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place to regulate the private rented housing sector in Northern Ireland. [24069]

Mr. Hanson: At present, all private tenancies are governed by some of the provisions of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. The main measures in place to regulate the sector are that all tenants must be provided with a rent book, must be given four weeks notice to quit when a tenancy is being brought to an end, and cannot be subjected to illegal eviction or harassment.

In the case of rents, regulation or control applies only to that section of the private rented sector subject to protected and statutory tenancies under the 1978 order. Some of these dwellings are in very good repair while others are not fit for human habitation. Security of tenure and the right to pass on a tenancy to a resident family member, likewise, only applies to such tenancies. Other tenancies are governed almost entirely by their tenancy agreements.

The Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 has been reviewed by the Department for Social Development and a draft Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 has recently been published for consultation. This order provides a more comprehensive regulatory framework for the private rented sector than currently exists.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to make disputes between landlords and tenants in the private rented sector subject to arbitration. [24073]

Mr. Hanson: The Department for Social Development and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive published their joint strategy for the private rented sector, entitled "Renting Privately: a strategic framework", in May 2004. This includes an objective to research and evaluate the need for an arbitration service and to conduct a pilot voluntary disputes project. The

Northern Ireland Housing Executive has commissioned research from the University of Ulster and a report is expected shortly.

Restorative Justice

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implementation of Recommendation 144 of the Criminal Justice Review on the piloting and evaluation of restorative justice schemes published by the Northern Ireland Office in March 2000. [23668]

Mr. Hanson: Careful consideration is currently being given to an externally commissioned evaluation of the Youth Conferencing Service which was recently extended to cater for juvenile offenders up to and including 17 years of age.

The potential for developing a similar service to deal with low level adult offending will be considered in light of further experience in operating the Youth Conference model.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it remains his policy that a full-time member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland must be present at and actively participate in all stages of any community restorative justice scheme funded by his Department. [23677]

Mr. Hanson: There is a statutory obligation for the attendance of police officers at all restorative justice youth conferences operated by the Youth Justice Agency and there are no plans to provide that this role be fulfilled by anyone other than a full-time member of Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Separate guidelines being developed for the operation of community-based restorative justice schemes also require schemes to work with criminal justice agencies, including the police, as recommended by the report of the Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy that persons convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland will be barred from participation in any community restorative justice schemes funded by his Department. [23678]

Mr. Hanson: The draft guidelines which are currently being developed will include a role for the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (Northern Ireland) in determining the suitability of staff employed by community-based restorative justice schemes.

Road Safety

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to reduce the age for free renewal of driving licences to 65-years in Northern Ireland. [23350]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently no plans to reduce the age for free renewal of driving licences to 65-years in Northern Ireland.

Speed Cameras

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been raised from speed cameras in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [21624]

Mr. Woodward: The number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued for excess speed since 2001 (the farthest back that records are held) that have been paid are:

	FPNs issued	*Fine levied per FPN (£)*	*Revenue generated (£)*
2001	10,750	60	645,000
2002	16,170	60	970,200
2003	12,913	60	774,780
2004	12,010	60	720,600
2005 (up to 21 October)	8,799	60	527,940

Where previously all of the fine revenue generated by safety cameras operated in Northern Ireland was paid into the UK Consolidated Fund, legislation was recently introduced that now allows the PSNI to recover costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the Northern Ireland Safety

The mechanisms necessary to facilitate the return of these monies are currently being established; whereupon the funds will be used to develop the scheme through the deployment of additional cameras that can be used to reduce road traffic collisions.

Surplus School Places

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how his Department estimates the number of surplus places in schools in Northern Ireland. [24037]

Angela E. Smith: I would refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington) on 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 665W.

Voter Registration

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the numbers registered to vote in each Westminster constituency in Northern Ireland has been since the introduction of individual registration in each year. [21357]

Mr. Hanson: The following table shows the number of people registered to vote in each year in each Westminster constituency in Northern Ireland since the introduction of individual registration in 2002. It also includes the 1 April 2005 Register which included the 70,363 former electors who appeared in the 1 September 2004 Register but who did not appear in the register published on 1 December 2004, and were added to the register under the provisions of the Electoral Registration (NI) Act 2005.

Electorate figures since 2002

Constituency/ year	*1 December 2002*	*2 February 2004*	*1 December 2004*	*1 April 2005*
Belfast East	50,929	50,005	48,503	53,176
Belfast North	49,937	49,114	46,008	52,853
Belfast South	49,349	49,403	46,718	52,668

Electorate figures since 2002

Constituency year	*1 December 2002*	*2 February 2004*	*1 December 2004*	*1 April 2005*
Belfast West	48,153	47,183	46,054	53,831
East Antrim	54,569	54,727	53,307	58,335
East Londonderry	55,466	55,260	54,759	58,861
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	63,010	62,993	61,774	67,174
Foyle	62,801	62,404	61,386	69,207
Lagan Valley	65,939	65,642	65,837	70,742
Mid Ulster	58,810	58,950	58,346	62,666
Newry and Armagh	66,802	67,433	66,593	72,448
North Antrim	69,728	69,942	70,087	74,450
North Down	56,606	56,137	54,734	59,748
South Antrim	62,349	62,983	60,315	66,931
South Down	68,317	68,515	68,022	73,668
Strangford	65,558	64,796	63,882	69,040
Upper Bann	67,595	67,713	67,033	72,402
West Tyrone	56,507	55,960	54,243	60,286
Total	1,072,425	1,069,160	1,047,601	1,148,486

It should be noted that due to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections taking place in November 2003, the publication of the 2003 Register which would have been published on 1 December 2003 was postponed until 2 February 2004.

Youth Conferences

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* diversionary and *(b)* court-ordered youth conferences have been established under the terms of Part IV of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. [23674]

Mr. Hanson: To the end of September 2005, there have been 100 diversionary and 216 court ordered youth conferences.